



Thursday, October 8, 2015

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MP FIGHTS DECISION BY POLICE

Report by Lee Watton



James Morris MP — will fight

Van driver gets £800 rubbish bill

A VAN driver who illegally dumped waste in Halesowen has been ordered to pay more than £800 by magistrates.

Aaron Cox, of St John's Road, Halesowen, duped a resident into paying £50 to have her waste removed by him.

But Dudley Magistrates Court was told that he had later dumped the black bags including garden waste and other rubbish on land in Hawne Park.

The rubbish was traced back to the resident who said she had paid Cox, aged 34, to properly dispose of it.

The court was told that he was also found to be carrying the rubbish in his van without a proper licence.

Cox admitted dumping the waste at court last week and also not having the correct licence to carry it.

Magistrates fined him £200 and ordered him to pay costs of £410, plus a £180 criminal court charge and a £20 victim surcharge — a total bill of £810.

Cabinet member for environmental services on Dudley Council, Councillor Hilary Bills said it was the taxpayer that ended up footing the bill for illegally dumped rubbish.

Dwindling congregation shuts church

A CHURCH is being forced to close after almost 100 years due to a dwindling congregation.

The number of people attending the Bethel Mission Free Church in Hasbury, Halesowen, has shrunk to so few that remaining members of the congregation have decided to wind the church up.

A Harvest of Memories celebration on October 18 will be the final chapter in the church's history.

Trustee Irene Layton, aged 83, has been going to the church for more than 70 years. She joined the church when she was just 10 when it had a thriving congregation.

Mrs Layton, of Islington, Halesowen, said: "Unfortunately, we're going to have to close due to dwindling numbers. The miracle we needed didn't happen."

The church holds special memories for Mrs Layton, as it is where she married her husband, where his funeral was held and also where her sister's funeral was held.

She said: "We used to have Sunday school and evening services which were very well attended. It's amazing how much things can change from one generation to the next."

His petition is online and a paper version will be available at his constituency office.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin has already campaigned against the closure of the front desk at Dudley's main police station.

The Labour MP said: "We all know savings have to be made but these closures are a direct result of the Government's decision to hand West Midlands Police disproportionate cuts — that are twice as deep as places like Surrey.

"We fought hard when they were closing the front desk to the public at Dudley earlier this year, presenting a petition signed by 2,200 local people to Parliament, and taking our case to the policing minister, the chief constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Push

"It's now more important than ever for people to add their name to our petition so we can push the Government, Dudley Council and West Midlands Police to find a way of keeping police based in the town."

Chairman of West Midlands Police Federation Tom Cuddeford said: "While these offices many not be open to the public, officers work from them and host meetings there. The closures will take officers further away from the communities they serve."

Stourbridge MP Margot James said protecting the jobs of police officers was the priority. She explained: "I am not going to oppose the move but that doesn't mean to say I'm not concerned. I think it's important the police have a presence in Stourbridge."

"I would be interested to see alternative plans. I don't think it's going to close for a couple of years and if a suitable premises can be established in Stourbridge that would be ideal."

Tennis ace Jordanne given MBE honour



Delighted Jordanne Whiley with her MBE presented by the Princess Royal during a ceremony this week at Buckingham Palace

Grand Slam success

TENNIS star Jordanne Whiley, one of Britain's most successful players, has described her joy at receiving an MBE from the Princess Royal.

Whiley last year completed the feat that has eluded all previous disabled and able bodied tennis players — a calendar Grand Slam of all four majors.

The 23-year-old from Halesowen, who has brittle bone disease, won the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and US Open doubles crowns with sporting partner Yui Kamiji from Japan. The pair dominate women's doubles and during 2015 defended their Wimbledon and Australian titles.

Whiley last month won the wheelchair singles championship

at the US Open, the first British woman to do so.

After the Buckingham Palace ceremony on Tuesday, the tennis star played down her achievement. "I didn't actually set out to do the calendar Grand Slam," she said.

"It wasn't until I'd won the Australian Open and Roland Garros that I said to Yui 'we're halfway there, we might as well go for all four' and everything just clicked."

Of her MBE, she added: "When I got the letter through the post I read it about five or six times, I thought it was a mistake."

She won wheelchair doubles bronze at the London 2012 Paralympics and aims for singles and doubles golds at the Rio Games.

DEVELOPMENT

Abbey barns to be made into homes

CONTROVERSIAL plans to convert six disused barns on a historic site into homes and a visitor centre have been approved.

Six homes will be created within the grounds of the historic scheduled monument Halesowen Abbey as part of the development, after proposals received delegated approval from Dudley Council.

Renewed plans were submitted by site owner Mrs Sue Tudor earlier this year after previous permissions expired.

Halesowen Abbey Trust still had concerns about the project although the group welcomed plans to improve a footpath.

CHARITIES

Marathon mayor plans heroic effort

THE Mayor of Dudley will be pounding the streets in a charity half-marathon dressed as Black Country Mon.

Councillor Steve Walther will don the tights and cape as the popular local hero for the Great Birmingham Run on October 18. He will be joined by a team of runners, also dressed as Black Country Mon, for the 13-mile course in aid of his five charities.

People wanting to sponsor him can via mydonate.bt.com/charities/mayorofdudleyscharities

SPEEDWAY

Heathens' future thrown into doubt

THE Cradley Heathens speedway club supporters' trust has admitted the club is 'heading into the unknown' after its owners announced they were walking away.

The Heathens have been plunged into crisis, with the outgoing bosses admitting they don't know whether the team's next fixture against King's Lynn will be its last.

Chairman Nigel Pearson and club partners Chris Van Straaten and Gary Patchett revealed they were going to step down at the weekend due to personal circumstances and other work commitments.

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INSIDE

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Edward Burns

A DANGEROUS predator who snatched a nine-year-old girl off a Black Country street as she walked home from Sunday prayers has been jailed for four-and-a-half years.

Edward Burns struck at lunchtime in Belmont Road, Bearwood, shortly after the child got off a bus.

The 38-year-old with no history of offences against children was carrying the screaming and struggling girl down an alleyway leading to his flat when a woman saw what was happening and shouted at him. He dropped the victim and fled but the victim's detailed description of the cul-

pit led to him being traced and arrested within days of the March 29 kidnap.

Recorder Nicholas Cartwright told Burns as the sentence was passed at Wolverhampton Crown Court: "It is pure good fortune that this woman intervened. I conclude there was a sexual motive behind this kidnapping and I am driven to the conclusion that this was not going to be trivial sexual activity. This little girl must have been terrified." The girl was knocked to the ground between two parked cars as Burns fell on top of her.

She was pinned face down and unable to cry out for help before he picked her up,

carried her across the road and down the alley where they were spotted.

Burns from Bearwood Road, Bearwood, admitted kidnap. He will have to serve at least two thirds of his prison sentence and will then be monitored under licence for a further six and a half years, five years more than would normally be the case because he was of the risk he represents.

Detective Constable Luke Stephens said: "The child was very brave and gave us a detailed description of the man who attacked her. I would also like to thank the public spirited actions of the woman who intervened and helped the child."

Agency bill for borough schools is nearly £5m

ALMOST £5 million was spent on agency staff at schools across Dudley in a year, figures reveal.

Schools forked out thousands of pounds on providing cover during 2014/15. Casual workers were brought into to cover sickness absences and maternity leave.

The figures, revealed under the Freedom of Information Act, did not include academies, which are run independently, but related to primary and secondary schools, special schools and nurseries.

Teaching cover cost £3.8m, while over a million spent on support staff. Expenditure can also cover full-time teachers covering other lessons or weekends.

Thorns Community College in Brierley Hill spent most on agency staff during the period, paying out £336,000. This was followed by the Priory Primary School which spent £193,000.

Other big spenders were the Pens Meadow Special School in Stourbridge, which spent £172,000, the Brier Special School in Kingswinford, which paid out £154,000, Dudley's Hillcrest Secondary School, which spent £132,000, and Colley Lane Primary School in Halesowen, £118,000. Old Park Special School in Brierley Hill spent £232,000 on other support staff, while the Coseley School paid £135,000.

Councillor Ian Cooper, boss of children's services, said: "School governors and head teachers manage their own budgets and make financial decisions in the best interests of pupils and the whole of the school."

Insurers raise £600 for charity

STAFF at specialist motoring insurance broker Footman James in Dudley have raised nearly £600 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The company, which has moved from Rowley Regis to Castlegate House beat last year's amount from a coffee morning for the charity by almost £100.

The event included a stall with sweet and savoury treats baked by staff and a raffle with more than 20 prizes ranging from afternoon tea to a month's free gym membership.

Director David Bond said: "We were delighted to sign up for Macmillan's coffee morning and raise money for such a worthwhile event."

Footman James, which started more than 30 years ago, moved to its new base last year. It employs 150 in the town.

Volunteers blitz rubbish on streets

TWENTY six bags of rubbish have been picked up across six roads in Tipton as part of Sandwell's Safer 6 campaign.

Volunteers from Tipton Litter Watch along with the Rowley Regis neighbourhood team took to the streets to collect litter from Mount Road to Park Road.

Banned driver jailed over soldier tragedy

A BANNED driver who sped through a red light at nearly 70mph and ploughed straight into a soldier's car, killing him instantly, has been jailed for 10 years.

Kasim Mohammed smashed into a car driven by Adam Hancox on the A4123 Wolverhampton Road between Bleakhouse Road and Cradley Road in Oldbury.

The 27-year-old, who had been out drinking the night before the crash, then ran off – leaving a seriously injured passenger in his Volkswagen Passat.

However, four witnesses saw Mohammed – who was disqualified from driving at the time – trying to run away and collared him, wrestling him to the ground.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard how the 'catastrophic' collision was caused by Mohammed's 'obvious and blatant disregard for the rules of the road'.

One witness described seeing Mohammed's Passat 'T-bone' Mr Hancox's Ford, according to Mr Kevin Gregg, prosecuting.

Mr Hancox, 26, of Pitcairn Road, Smetwick, was on sick leave when the crash happened on November 23 last year.

After being arrested close to the scene, Mohammed, of Bearwood Road, Smetwick, twice refused to provide a specimen of breath.

Mohammed's passenger described him speeding up on the approach, 'as if he could beat' the lights. CCTV at the side of the road has been used to work out that Mohammed was travelling at a minimum of 69mph when he was just 90m from the junction – but he did not slow down.

The speed limit on the road is 40mph.

Mohammed pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving, driving whilst disqualified, failing to stop at the scene of an accident, failing to provide a specimen and driving without insurance. He was also disqualified from driving.

The pair, who were inside, managed to leave the flat and were detained by police at the scene.

They were both taken to hospital with minor injuries and will be questioned about what happened when they are fit to do so.

No one else is believed to have been injured in the explosion or fire, but structural damage was caused to the house, leading to

Two hurt after explosion at flat



The damaged property in Rowley Regis, after the explosion.

Picture: Adrian Crowe

TWO men have been injured and 20 people evacuated after an explosion in a Rowley Regis flat caused a fire.

The pair, who were inside, managed to leave the flat and were detained by police at the scene.

They were both taken to hospital with minor injuries and will be questioned about what happened when they are fit to do so.

No one else is believed to have

been injured in the explosion or

fire, but structural damage was

caused to the house, leading to

the evacuation of 20 residents from homes in the immediate vicinity as a precaution.

The 20 people spent Tuesday night in temporary accommodation following the explosion which took place just before 10.10pm.

West Midlands Police have launched an investigation following the explosion in Oldbury Road.

Fire crews also attended the blaze and Oldbury Road was closed at the junction with Penn-cricket Lane.



Picture: Lee Baker

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Nearly one thousand temp jobs at council

NEARLY 1,000 staff are being employed on temporary contracts by Dudley Council.

The 978 employees hired by Dudley Council are paid on average £11.52 per hour, well above the national minimum wage of £6.50.

The majority are employed by the authority to work in schools across the borough. A total of 462 temporary staff work as either teachers or teaching assistants.

Other roles include administration assistants, library assistants, park rangers and social workers.

The authority was criticised in June when it emerged it was forking out £800 a day on employing an interim chief officer for children's services. The council has twice tried unsuccessfully to fill the post.

Necessary

Councillor Judy Foster, cabinet member for corporate and customer services, said: "The work of the council is very varied and sometimes it is necessary to use temporary staff, such as seasonal staff who are required to work at specific times of the year, or those filling a statutory role which cannot be left vacant."

She added: "We employ temporary staff on occasions until a permanent member of staff can be found to fill the role."

"In all instances we ensure that the right person is taken on for the role to ensure we continue to provide first class services for borough residents."

Dangerous drug stolen from van

POLICE are warning about a potentially lethal drug that was stolen from a pharmacy van which was driven across the Black Country before being dumped in Wolverhampton.

The van was taken from Gough Road, Dudley, just before 10am on Thursday, then found a short time later in Bradley.

Two prescriptions were found to be missing, one of which was for the anti-cancer drug methotrexate.

Police say this drug is extremely dangerous to touch and could cause serious injury or even death if ingested by children or animals.

The 16 yellow tablets are in a small brown click-lock bottle.

Anyone with information should contact Wolverhampton Police on 101.

Peaky Blinders in return to locations

FILMING was due to start on the new series of Brummie gangster drama Peaky Blinders this week. The third series is expected to be shot on location in the Midlands again, including the Black Country Living Museum.

Edwards pride of place in heart of Dudley



Mayor Steve Walther, Conor Devlin and freestyle footballer Colin Nell

HE is one of Dudley's most loved footballing heroes and now Duncan Edwards' statue has been given new prominence in the heart of the town.

Members of his family were among scores of people who attended a re-dedication ceremony last week.

The Manchester United and England star's statue has been repositioned as part of a revamp of the town centre.

It would have been Edwards' 79th birthday on October 1 and he remains a legend to many in the Black Country.

Duncan's cousin Keith, 78, at the ceremony said: "It means a lot to all of us. We come down here twice a year, on the day Duncan was born and the day he died. The whole family are so proud."

The statue has been moved across the market place to the Castle Street side as part of a £6.7 million revamp.

Coachloads

Three coachloads of Manchester United fans travelled to Dudley for the special service.

Brian Mulholland, from the Man-

chester United Supporters Club, said the re-dedicated statue would become a pilgrimage site for thousands of Manchester United fans.

Mr Mulholland, 65, said: "It's a credit to the town, Dudley Council and especially to Duncan's family."

A new plinth on the statue was unveiled by Mayor of Dudley Councillor Steve Walther and Duncan's third cousin, 12-year-old Connor Devlin.

Duncan Edwards died aged 21 from injuries sustained in the 1958 Munich air disaster.

Town's car parks could be replaced by housing

TOWN centre car parks in Cradley Heath will be axed under plans to cut costs at cash-strapped Sandwell Council.

Many shoppers park at Tesco Extra – where there is no charge – meaning three of the five council-run car parks are considered surplus to requirements.

But the move has drawn criticism from High Street traders who claim the move would cripple their business and push more shoppers to the supermarket giant.

The car parks at Corngreaves Road, Graingers Lane and Northgate/Prince Street are set to be sold off following a review by council bosses. New housing could be built on the land under the proposals.

Councillor Bill Gavan, chairman of the land and asset management committee, said: "In Cradley Heath most people park on Tesco."

"I think that it could save thousands. If they were bringing in money they would be kept but obviously there is not enough money coming in."

"The council wants to keep council tax down. Other things need to be looked at."

"We hear about building more social housing. More social housing is needed. The land could be used."

Customers

But Rajesh Sethi, manager of the Ransons discount store in High Street, said the move would badly affect trade.

"If we have not got most of the car parks here we will not have the footfall and we will definitely be losing customers," he explained. "They have already put the parking charges in and people park instead in Tesco. People will shop wherever is easily available from their car."

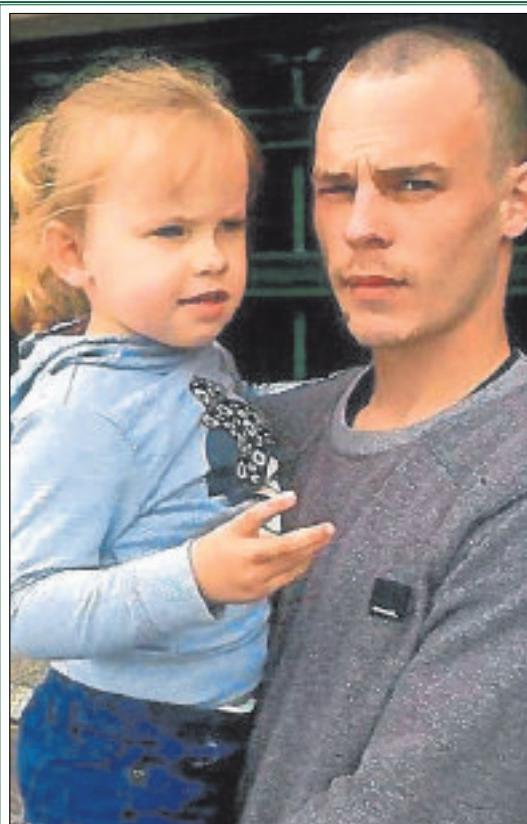
"This council does not seem to bother about football and bringing customers in. If they do not support local business they should not be charging us business rates."

If approved the proposals would be a further blow to traders following weeks of roadworks.

A stretch of the High Street has been shut to drivers for almost two months to allow for a £100,000 gas works scheme.

The work between St Anne's Road and the West Bromwich Building Society is due to be completed on Saturday.

Mr Sethi said he had lost at least 25 percent of his trade as a result of the works and added that the town was now at its 'economic lowest'.



Netherton father Craig Griffiths, aged 26, who died after his car crashed on Birmingham New Road, pictured with his five-year-old daughter

Family's tributes after car tragedy

TRIBUTES have been paid to a car enthusiast who died when his vehicle smashed into a tree and lampost beside the Birmingham New Road in Dudley.

Craig Griffiths got out of the car after the crash but then suffered a cardiac arrest at the scene. Paramedics treated him and he was taken to Russells Hall Hospital where he later died.

The family of Mr Griffiths has released a picture of him with his five-year-old daughter.

In a statement, the heartbroken family said: "He was a quiet and shy young man with a cheeky, infectious smile and he would do anything for anyone, always put others first."

The 26-year-old from Netherton was described as a brilliant father.

The crash happened near the empty King Arthur pub at around 10.20pm on September 29. No other vehicles are believed to have been involved. A passenger, aged 26, suffered minor injuries and was taken to hospital for treatment.

Floral tributes have been placed at the site by friends and family.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sunday market opens for business

DUDLEY Market will open on Sundays for the first time ever in the lead up to Christmas.

Bosses hope the change, which comes into effect from October 25, will 'bring life back in to the town'.

A new company called Dudley Market Traders now run the market.

It is the first scheme of its kind in the Black Country, with Dudley Council retaining ownership of the market but handing over its running to the traders.

The market currently runs six days a week.

Glamorous ball is for Beacon charity

A LEADING West Midlands IT services provider has stepped forward to ensure a charity's 140th anniversary ball is a glittering success.

Osha Ltd, based in Broadlands, Wolverhampton, is sponsoring the Beacon event tomorrow (Fri).

The glamorous black tie 'Hollywood Ball' will be held at the Copthorne Hotel, Merry Hill, and tickets are priced at £30 per person, which includes a three-course meal and welcome drink.

More information is available at www.beaconvision.org website.

Music and food in celebrations

A MUSIC event with Caribbean food is just one of the events taking place in Dudley to celebrate Black History Month.

The theme for this year's event – which takes place this month – is past and present. Events include local history talks, free taster sessions for an ancestry website and a variety of events celebrating black history. A free music and food tasting event at Dudley Library takes place on Saturday, October 17.

Restaurant revamp for pub at Castlegate

A PUB will be transformed into a Harvester restaurant under plans which will create jobs in Dudley.

Bostin Fittle, based on Castlegate Park, near Dudley Archives and the Black Country Living Museum, has been taken over by pub group Mitchells and Butlers.

The pub will be re-branded as a Harvester with a new menu and a revamped interior.

It was among 173 sites acquired from the Orchid pub estate in 2014.

Cradley choir tune up

CRADLEY Heath Male Voice Choir is set to entertain audiences at concerts.

The choir will perform at Dudley Wood Methodist Church on Saturday and at the Methodist Centre in Tividale on October 17.

Tickets can be bought on the door or in advance on 07790 198156

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ANACHRONISM Abbey. More 2015 terms allegedly spoken at Downton in 1925. Walking alone is "so liberating." Having a local hospital is "a huge plus." One character has been "put through an emotional wrangle." Not to mention the repeated use of the word "pregnant" which was a medical term in those days and not used in private chat.

MY German diesel is rated at 40 miles per gallon. God knows how much I may have been short-changed by the emissions-fiddling scandal, and how much compensation the blighters owe me. So I filled the tank, recorded the total mileage and divided it by the gallons consumed, which is the only true test of any car's fuel consumption. It does not do 40mpg. It does 41.25mpg. Do I owe them?

THE Drama Channel has replayed the entire 1995 BBC adaptation of Pride and Prejudice to mark its 20th anniversary. The big surprise is to discover online that Jennifer Ehle, the definitive English rose who played Elizabeth Bennet, was actually born in North Carolina and speaks with an American accent, y'all.



MY campaign to award exclamation marks to British towns and villages is gathering pace. The Devon village of Westward Ho! is the only place with one. Suggestions include Tring! and Middle Wallop!

THE Death toll at last week's Hajj disaster is now reckoned to be over 1,000. Saudi Arabia's most senior cleric insists that the crush was "beyond human control." Nonsense. It wouldn't have happened in Disneyland.

DAVID Cameron goes to Jamaica and local activists start demanding reparations for the slave trade. This may be the right time for us Yorkshire folk to raise the issue of the Harrowing of the North by the Normans in 1069. The whole region was laid waste and thousands were slaughtered or died of famine. If it had not been for the Harrowing I feel sure I would be living in a much bigger house, earning far more money and would not have lost my hair. Shall we say £20 million?

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Children's centres may host health services

EXTRA services will be moved into children's centres across Dudley, as part of a shake-up in the borough.

The changes are coming about because the responsibility for commissioning public health services for children has transferred from NHS England to local authorities.

by Rob Cox

point of access for children and families.

"There is a slight variance in roles between different providers in supporting children and families, so this transfer will enable them to work more closely together around families' needs. Pilot sites are still to be decided.

Moving the registration of new births to children centres will also be explored to increase the numbers of vulnerable families accessing other available services.

The report states the advantage of the council taking over responsibilities is that it has the potential to provide a more cost-effective service built around individual needs.

Benefit

Deborah Harkins, chief officer for health and well-being at Dudley Council, said: "The benefit of bringing these services together is to provide an integrated service with a single

point of access for children and families.

She added: "This development is in the very early stages of consideration. We will consult local communities if it is felt there is merit in these proposals before taking any final decision."

Stars have the wow factor



Reality TV stars Jake Quickenden and Stephanie Pratt

FORMER X Factor singer turned I'm A Celebrity star Jake Quickenden and reality TV star Stephanie Pratt wowed the crowds at a special students' night at Merry Hill shopping centre.

The famous pair were guests of honour as Intu Merry Hill centre held its annual student night of offering discounts at the shopping complex. They appeared on stage and took part in a game where they were joined by members of the crowd to try and remember the lyrics of songs.

Jake, who won an army of fans during last year's X Factor and I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here, was mobbed with requests for pictures and autographs. He was mentored by Mel B in the star-making show before entering the celebrity jungle and finishing runner-up to superbiker Carl Fogarty.

He was happy with the reaction, saying: "They were all lovely, it was really nice. I have been to Birmingham quite a few times, it is the first time in Dudley but it won't be the last."

Glamorous Stephanie was due to be accompanied by fellow Made In Chelsea star Jamie Laing but he was unable to make it.

Prab joins the run in memory of brother

A ROAD-running Tipton man is gearing up for a marathon challenge in memory of his brother.

Prab Sahota, aged 36, is hitting the Great Birmingham Run on October 18 in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice.

The charity provided care for his brother, Pavan, who was born with muscular dystrophy and died in December 1997, aged just 16.

Mr Sahota is an administration and quality manager at Birmingham University. He said: "My brother attended Acorns from a young age and enjoyed his stay there as it enabled him to be more independent."

"The staff were brilliant and helped provide stimulation and laughter."

"As Pavan got older, his condition deteriorated but at Acorns he could do what he wanted, like go on trips and get to know children his own age."

"He had a lot of fond memories and made lots of friends during his time there."

The Great Birmingham Run is not the first time Mr Sahota has been involved in fundraising. In 2010 he did a Great Wall of China trek and recently abseiled to raise money.

He added: "I've been involved in various fundraising events over the years for the charity. If I can help other families like Acorns helped mine, it'll make it all worth it."

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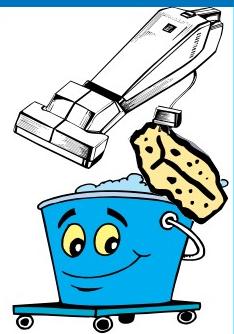
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£100m flats scheme for car park site

PLANS have been unveiled for a £100 million development of more than 300 rented flats on the site of a car park in Birmingham city centre.

Put together by developer Sterling Property Ventures and its funding partner, London-based Long Harcourt, the scheme for at Great Charles Place was revealed last week.

The first phase of the project would include 320 studio, one, two and three bedroom apartments, 20,000 sq ft of ground floor shops and leisure space, and a mix of units, totalling 8,000 sq ft, to cater for small businesses. There will also be 100 car parking spaces for residents.

The apartments will have a dedicated reception with 24-hour security and a porter service, while a communal garden will provide outdoor space for residents, with shared roof terraces offering views across the city.

If it secures the backing of Birmingham council work will start in January, with the first apartments available to rent from early 2018.

James Howarth, managing director of Sterling Property Ventures, said: "Plans for Great Charles Place have been on the drawing board for two years so we are extremely excited to finally be in a position to share our vision for the scheme with the public. Getting a funder on board was the last piece of the puzzle."

Overnight closure of M5 for resurfacing

THE M5 near Halesowen will be closed overnight for eight hours until the end of this month, for work to take place on a stretch from the Grange Road roundabout.

The motorway will be shut between 10pm and 6am in both directions from junction 3 to junction 4a for resurfacing work to take place.

A PUBLIC appeal has been launched to raise £35,000 towards creating a hammer sculpture on a traffic island into Halesowen.

Metal artist Luke Perry is creating the anvil and hammer sculpture after being commissioned by the town's chamber of trade.

People have urged officials to brighten up Grange Road Island at the junction with A456 Manor Way. It is hoped the sculpture will create an improved image for motorists on their way into the town.

Halesowen Chamber of Trade chairman Wayne Edwards said that the sculpture would be an asset to the community. It will cost around £28,000 and landscaping is estimated at a further £7,000.

Mr Edwards said: "When Luke came back to us with his ideas I think he will create a really iconic structure for Halesowen."

The statue is a steel frame anvil to allow visibility for drivers with a hand and hammer in sheet steel positioned on top. It will be made from steel and part galvanised, taking around six months to complete. Mr Perry will create the sculpture in his factory in Cradley Heath.

"The hammer and anvil represented the metal working trades that dominated and still continue to be present in Halesowen," he said.

A CARE firm based in Tipton is set to create at least 100 jobs in the Black Country over the next year as it meets increasing demand for looking after people in their own homes.

Tipton Homecare already employs 129, including 121 community care workers, and is to begin recruiting to fill vacancies in its team.

Human resources manager Lisa Johnson said that the 19-year-old business was looking to take on 20 employees every six weeks.

"We are looking for both men and women aged from 18 who meet our requirements," she said. "Unqualified staff will undergo an induction training programme and will shadow experienced carers until they have passed the training programme when they will go into service users' homes on their own."

Tipton Homecare, which is registered with the Care Quality Commission, has an eight-strong headquarters team at Venture Business Park, Bloomfield Road.

Dementia

The business, owned by Catherine and Stuart Higgins, started in Tipton in 1996 and has grown to serve surrounding towns including Wednesbury, Rowley Regis, West Bromwich, Walsall, Great Barr, Dudley, Bilston and Sedgley.

"We provide care in people's homes for older people, those with mental health issues, learning disabilities, dementia and Alzheimer's. We also provide care for people just discharged from hospital and work with social services on providing care packages," said Miss Johnson.

She said that unqualified staff worked towards getting an NVQ in care.

For details, visit www.tiptonhomecare.co.uk

Drone rules re-examined after incidents

REGULATIONS on the use of drones could be tightened following a number of near-misses with aircraft close to major airports — including Birmingham airport.

Ministers are considering introducing a system to track the flight path of drones.

The UK Airprox Board investigated seven near-misses in the 12 months to July. The regulator is also believed to be examining four others cases, including one near Birmingham.

A spokesman for the Civil Aviation Authority, the UK's aviation regulator, said: "It is vital that people observe the rules when operating a drone. When putting a device into the air they are interacting with one of the busiest areas of airspace in the world — a complex system that brings together all manner of aircraft including passenger aeroplanes, military jets, helicopters, gliders, light aircraft and now drones."

A very hand-some work of art proposed



An artist's impression of the proposed Halesowen Hand sculpture to be positioned on the Grange Road island in Halesowen

A PUBLIC appeal has been launched to raise £35,000 towards creating a hammer sculpture on a traffic island into Halesowen.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Slogan was plumbing the depths for rugby

I KNOW nothing about rugby, and to be frank I find the oval-ball game about as interesting as a box set of *Downton Abbey*.

But the England team went into this World Cup under the slogan "let's get the job done."

That's not a battle cry, it's an advert for a plumbers' merchant. No wonder they were baldcoks.

...

MAYBE the story about the Government allowing police forces to use devious, covert methods to snare speeding drivers, and then changing its mind following tabloid intervention, should be treated with a degree of scepticism.

But what says so much about Britain today is the explanation given by the Government for dropping the code of practice which said cameras only be bright yellow and only located at accident blackspot. "A Department for Transport spokesman said the 2007 rules were out of date," said the report.

Oh yes, out of date. That time-honoured, catch-all phrase for everyone with no other justification for their actions. Aside from the fact that the guidelines were introduced only eight years ago, since when has transport legislation been about the whims of fashion?

There are lots of things about our judicial systems that are out of date. Judges wearing wigs, Lords wearing ermine. Titles like Lord Chancellor and Mr Justice Smith. By and large they are harmless, and if anything maybe give a bit of gravitas to the proceedings.

But rules saying that speed cameras should be sensibly located and not hidden from view? Surely that's just fair play and common sense.

If the guidelines do need updating, how about adding a requirement that every camera should be clearly marked with what the actual speed limit is? I know at this point the pedants will point out that in the absence of a sign to the contrary national speed limits apply, which means 30 in a built-up-area, 60 on a single carriageway, and 70 on a double. But why not make it easy? They do want people to stick to the limits, don't they?

Meanwhile, it was revealed at the weekend the closure of 28 police stations around West Midlands. We all know cash is short and cuts have to be made, but how can it be right leaving a town the size of Dudley without a police station, and then spending money on hidden speed traps? Maybe they think police stations are out of date as well.

■ ■ ■

THEN again, there are some things about life today I find difficult to get my head around.

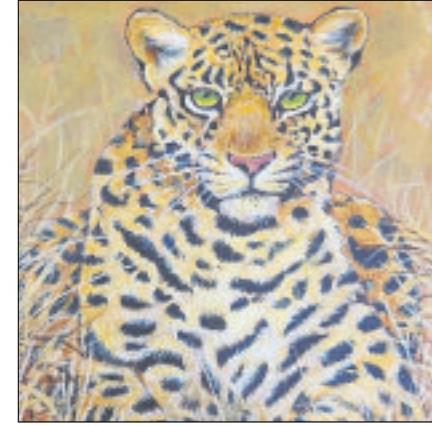
Like how is it that the most popular programme on television today is about a bunch of people baking cakes?



Sam strokes a cheetah while working at Dudley Zoo in 1962



Thank you gifts – one of the paintings created for Dudley Zoo



Sam's father would tell him stories about leopards

Artist's inspiration fired by time at zoo

Zoo keeper sacked because of too much time spent drawing animals says thanks for career.
HEATHER LARGE reports

GROWING up listening to stories about leopards prowling the jungle inspired Rama Samaraweera to become a keeper at Dudley Zoo.

But this love for big cats also got the self-taught artist the sack from the Castle Hill attraction – because he spent more time sketching the animals than on his zoo duties.

Now aged 89, he has created three original oil paintings for the zoo to say thank you for being his 'art school' and also to make amends for 'not being the best ever zoo keeper'.

Birmingham-born Mr Samaraweera, known as Sam, began working at the attraction in 1962, and before getting the elbow became fond of many of the animal residents, who he loved to study and draw.

Encouraged

His love of animals came from his father, a doctor and surgeon from Ceylon, now known as Sri Lanka, who told him stories about the wild animals and encouraged his art.

He said: "As a four-year-old I drew tigers and other animals and was always encouraged by my father."

"Dad trained in the UK and worked as a GP in Birmingham, where I was born. He told me stories of leopards and elephants in the jungle and told me I was an artist and not a doctor."

"Forty years later I became a self-employed artist, having learned to understand the big cats and other animals whilst working as a zoo keeper at Dudley Zoo."

"I was soon sacked for spending too much time drawing and studying the animals. This was my only art school."

Mr Samaraweera said he grew a particular soft spot for some of the animals during his



Former zoo keeper Rama Samaraweera with his oil paintings of animals

time at the attraction. He added: "I fell in love with Grace the giraffe, who took a banana from my coat pocket each day with her long tongue."

"I used to walk the cheetahs round the zoo, which always caused excitement, and much

amusement when one lay down and would not be budged. It often took two keepers just to move it!"

After leaving the zoo his art career took off, leading him to exhibit at the Royal Academy, The Society of Wood Engravers, The Graphic

Society, The Society of Wildlife Artists and The Pastel Society. In the 1970s his 'Clouded Leopard' picture was the biggest-selling print in America.

He said: "After training as teacher, my wife Sue and I went to teach in Jamaica and I lectured in art and English literature."

"Later my publisher and great friend, the late John Solomon, gave me my first

London exhibition, which sold out. John then published several prints during the 1970s and my painting of a clouded leopard became the best-selling print in America."

"The house we now live in is called Solomon House, after John Solomon, and the royalties from the leopard print and many others paid for our home."

"John told me I must paint for love and never money – and I never forgot this sound advice. Like most artists, I am very driven and have to go to my studio every day."

Mr Samaraweera, who now lives in South Wales, wanted to thank the zoo for inspiring his career as an artist, which has spanned five decades.

His nephew Phil Brooks, who is head of photography at Dudley College, delivered the artworks to the zoo.

Professional

"The three pictures are to say thank you to Dudley Zoo for inspiring uncle Sam and also to try and make amends for him not being the best ever zoo keeper."

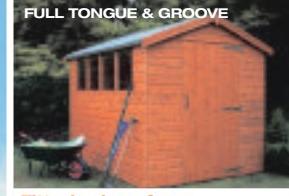
"He's been a professional wildlife painter for the last 50 years and to this day credits Dudley Zoo as the catalyst for his career. Uncle Sam was only at the zoo for a year but he did love the animals, especially the big cats."

"His doctor says it's the painting which keeps uncle Sam young because he gets so deeply lost in his work that it puts him into a meditative state."

Zoo director Derek Grove said: "We are so grateful to Sam for giving us these incredible pieces of art. 'I'm glad he's enjoyed such a rewarding career in art after leaving zoo keeping behind and we'll definitely make sure the paintings take pride of place at Dudley Zoo."

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COMPETITION

COMBINE your Christmas shopping with a fun day out as the Festive Gift Fair is back, this year celebrating its 20th birthday.

Chronicle readers can be there to enjoy all the fun of the fair.

With more than 325 stalls from all over the country, overflowing with cracking gift ideas, visitors are guaranteed to be inspired.

One of the most popular Christmas shopping events in the UK takes place at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham from November 12-15 with more to see, try, touch, taste, buy and enjoy than ever before.

The variety is huge, with something for all the family – from babies to teenagers, from parents to grandparents!

Youngsters

There will be entertainment while you shop, courtesy of live bands, while the fair wouldn't be the same without the most outrageous Dame accompanied by Father Christmas himself.

For the youngsters there are lots of fun and games for tiny tots to school children to enjoy.

Presents to keep forever include thoughtful personalised gifts, tree decorations and stockings, together with family heirlooms.

Christmas is the one time of the year when everyone can over indulge a little.

At the fair you can sample a host of festive favourites before you buy – from delicious cheeses to Christmas puddings and much more in between, with a host of beers and spirits also on offer.

Fragrances, candles, pampering products and cookery gifts can also be found under the one roof. For more information on exhibitors and visiting the fair, visit www.festivegiftfair.co.uk



It wouldn't be the Festive Gift Fair without Father Christmas

HOW TO ENTER

THE Chronicle has teamed up with the organisers to offer 10 pairs of tickets for the show. To stand a chance of winning just answer this simple question.

The Festive Gift Fair is celebrating which anniversary this year?

Send your answer with your name, address and daytime contact details to: Festive Gift Fair Competition, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date is October 18.

Usual Chronicle rules apply. Editor's decision is final.



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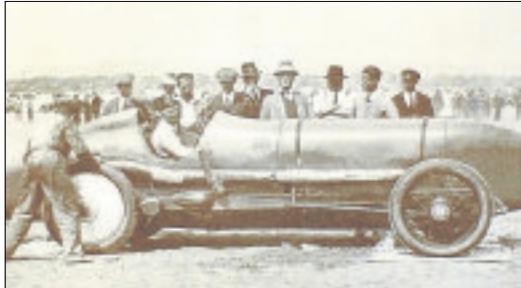
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The 350 hp Sunbeam on Pendine Sands, first car over 150 mph

The JCB DieselMax on Bonneville Salt Flats

Boulton & Paul wind tunnel model of the 350hp Sunbeam



George Eyston's Thunderbolt under construction



The 1000hp Sunbeam, first car over 200 mph

Producing records at a rate of knots

STAFFORDSHIRE may well be the greatest county in the world for producing Land Speed Record breaking cars.

The chief engineer at the Sunbeam Motor Car Co in Wolverhampton, Louis Coatalen, was a great advocate of racing, and it was his post-First World War racing car usually called the Sunbeam 350 hp which first broke the World Land Speed Record (LSR).

It was powered by a version of a V12 Sunbeam Manitou aero engine, and after the famous pilot Harry Hawker had crashed it at Brooklands, Malcolm Campbell took it to the Saltburn Speed Trials and set a world record time of 138.08 mph, which was not ratified because only stop watches were used for timing.

Boulton & Paul of Norwich then tested it in their wind tunnel and improved its aerodynamics with

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

a new cowl and streamlined tail. Campbell took it to Pendine Sands in September 1924, and set an official LSR of 146.16 mph. The following year he went back, and increased his record to 150.87 mph, the first car in the world to exceed 150mph.

Recently Campbell's grandson drove the newly restored 350 hp Sunbeam from Pendine, though at a more sedate pace.

In March 1926 Henry Seagrave, one of the other great names in speed record attempts, took the brand new Sunbeam Tiger racing car to Southport sands and raised the record to 152.33 mph.

This car, which had the smallest engine ever to hold the LSR, still exists in Utah, where it was driven at 159 mph in 1990.

Next, Coatalen produced a purpose-built LSR car for Henry Seagrave to attempt to break the 200

mph barrier for the first time. Fitted with two 450 hp Sunbeam Matable aero-engines, the 1000hp Sunbeam, aka Slug, achieved 203.79 mph on Daytona Beach in March 1927.

The baton was now passed to Coseley, where Bean Cars built the Thunderbolt for George Eyston, powered by two 36.7 litre Rolls-Royce V12 engines.

With this car Eyston took the record at Bonneville Salt Flats, in November 1937 with a speed of 311.49 mph. The LSR changed hands several times over the next few months, with John Cobb in competition with Eyston, who raised it to 345.49 mph in August 1938, and finally 357.50 mph in September.

Staffordshire returned to the world of speed records in 2006, when Uttoxeter's JCB sent their specially commissioned JCB DieselMax, powered by two turbocharged JCB diesel engines to Bonneville, and broke the LSR for diesel powered-cars at 328.77 mph.



The 350hp Sunbeam at Brooklands before streamlining

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10 Children's services facing further Government scrutiny

GOVERNMENT officials will scrutinise Sandwell Council children's services department to check it is up to scratch – and could step in if its performance is considered under par.

A team from the Department for Education (DfE) will probe whether the authority is looking after the service, which was ranked inadequate by Ofsted in June.

If the council is deemed incapable of improving the services, an independent commissioner could be parachuted in to take charge or a team of experts from another council appointed.

The Ofsted inspection in June was the second time in succession the children's services at the council had been labelled inadequate.

But Kingston University Professor Ray Jones – who was appointed by the Government to oversee improvements – disagreed with the judgement.

Capacity

Council leader Councillor Darren Cooper said he welcomed the visit from independent officials from the DfE and was confident the council was improving.

A DfE spokesman said: "We have commissioned an assessment of the council's capacity to improve. This will also provide recommendations on how to secure and sustain the necessary improvements in children's services."

Since June, the council brought in a two-year improvement plan to address some of the issues highlighted by the watchdog.

Councillor Cooper said: "We had a difference of opinion with Ofsted and so someone independent is coming to have a look at what we're doing. I expect us to show we're doing well."

"We're not looking for any vindication about the Ofsted report, as we know there are still issues we need to address but we are on course to deal with them."

House will be going back to the 1940s

STAFF at a historic house in Sandwell are turning the clock back to the 1940s with a weekend of food, music and costumes from the war years.

The free family days out are Haden Hill House Museum in Halesowen Road, Cradley Heath, on Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 3pm.

Visitors can find out what life was like when items from the Haden Hill House collection go on display. There will also wartime music, a food tasting event, a chance to learn about rationing and children's craft activities.

On Saturday, wartime re-enactors in period dress will help to enhance the 40s atmosphere.

"We are inviting young and old to travel back 70 years and join us for a weekend of World War Two nostalgia and learn about what life was like during the 1940s," said Alison Hyatt, visitor services officer.

Admission is free but there may be a small charge for some activities. Call (01384) 569 444.

A star-studded panto? Oh yes it is!



Aladdin stars Julian Clary and Matt Slack pose with a dragon at Birmingham Hippodrome as tickets go on sale

FESTIVE cheer arrived early in the West Midlands as the stars of this year's Birmingham Hippodrome pantomime took centre stage for the launch of the annual extravaganza.

Popular panto stars Julian Clary and Matt Slack are returning to star in Aladdin with Wet Wet Wet frontman Marti Pellow as the villain.

Comedian and former Celebrity Big Brother winner Julian Clary teamed up with Slack, who will be performing in his third consecutive panto at the Hippodrome, to launch the show.

The pair got into their costumes to pose for photographs before discussing their hopes for this year's production, with Clary declaring he 'can't wait' to get going.

Clary, who will be playing the Spirit of the Ring, said: "I am very excited. I can't wait to get back into the swing of things. I have done a lot of pantomime over the years but never Aladdin, so it is a whole new character, a whole new costume, new set and new lines for me to learn.

"We will be using 3D effects to enhance the show, which can be quite full-on for the audience and strange for performers, but a lot of fun. We are moving pantomime forward."

Matt Slack, who will be playing the role of Wishee Washee, said he plays a hands-on part in making sure everything is just right for his character to get big laughs.

He said: "I tweak the scripts here and there, it is a team thing of course but I really enjoy doing that. I think as a team we will come up with something really special."

Jailed thief is banned from entering shops

A SERIAL thief has been banned from entering shops across Dudley borough for two years following thefts from stores in Halesowen and Stourbridge.

Tracey Rowley, of Church Road, Lye, was jailed for 23 weeks for stealing perfume, meat and razors.

On release she will be banned from entering any Wilkinsons, Boots or Asda shop anywhere in the borough for two years and has been issued with a Criminal Behaviour Order.

The 35-year-old admitted three thefts when she appeared before Dudley magistrates on September 15, and was given a seven-week jail term for each.

Fragrance

On July 25 she stole two bottles of fragrance from Boots in the Ryemarke Shopping Centre, Stourbridge, worth a total of £130.

Then, on September 7, she took washing liquid and razors worth £72 from a Wilkinsons store in Halesowen.

Five days later Rowley stole meat worth £60 from the Asda supermarket, also in Halesowen.

She was given a further two weeks behind bars for failing to attend supervision appointments that had been arranged for her in August, following her release from prison.

Get podging at rug workshops in libraries

CRAFTY people are invited to try a traditional Black Country craft at Halesowen Library.

A free one hour workshop in rag rug podging will be held at the library in the Cornbow Shopping Centre.

The event takes place on Thursday, October 15, from 11am to noon. See a member of staff or call (01384) 812983 for more information.

A similar workshop is at Long Lane Library on October 21 at 3pm.

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Everyone gets what no one voted for

DANIEL WAINWRIGHT
Political Editor

THE kingdom of Mercia rising up to challenge the expansionist West Midlands Combined Authority has a certain romance to it.

Of course it's really rather more bureaucratic than that.

The counties of Staffordshire and Shropshire don't see themselves as part of what is commonly known as the West Midlands, or do they want to be left behind to become a leafy meat in the sandwich of a Northern Powerhouse and a Midlands Engine.

The rural counties are facing the same dilemma that the Black Country and Birmingham had a year ago.

If they do not throw their lot in with someone, they risk losing out on investment and powers to the likes of Greater Manchester.

Pride

But they also have their own pride and their own identities. Similarly, they have their own separate issues.

Staffordshire is not Birmingham, even if many people in some parts of it happen to work in the second city.

So the suggestion by MPs Gavin Williamson, Jeremy Lefroy and Karen Bradley is for Staffordshire, Shropshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire to join forces in a 'Mercian' economic partnership.

Mercia is a much nicer name than West Midlands Combined Authority, or WMCA, which seems to be racing ahead, if the leaked document about its bid for devolved powers is anything to go by. No-one connected with the



Would George Osborne go for the nationalisation of the M6 Toll?

WMCA is allowed to talk about what is meant to be a work in progress.

For a start, until this document came to light there was no firm plan to accept an elected mayor.

Now we find the first citizen of the West Midlands is not only very much on the cards but also set to have the power to levy council tax. And there's an ambitious bid for millions of pounds of taxpayers' money to make the M6 Toll free to use.

It might well put paid to any suggestions of reviving the Western Orbital Route. But would the Chancellor go for it? Nationalising a private company doesn't sound particularly Tory. Yet if it's in the powers of a democratically elected regional mayor, George Osborne can wash his hands of the whole thing. Another thing we have

learned is that Telford and Wrekin wants in to the WMCA, following Cannock Chase and Tamworth.

The three won't be full members, but rather 'non-constituent' ones. What that means is a seat at the table and voting rights, but no involvement in the devolution deal. That leaves them free to sign up to the Staffordshire MPs' grand Mercia plan as well.

It's all starting to get a little messy. There's also still the issue of a small but vocal group of people who feel rather cheated that they will not get a referendum on the matter.

And there's the rub on devolution. It's all meant to be about democracy and putting power in the hands of the people. But as things stand, everyone's going to get what no-one voted for.

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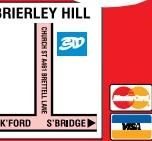
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Airport profits soar above £30m mark

THE busiest ever year at Birmingham Airport helped profits rocket to more than £30 million as 9.9 million passengers passed through the terminals.

The site's profits rose to £30.6m in the 12 months to the end of March, from £27.9m the year before – a 9.7 per cent increase. The biggest boost came from travellers using its growing number of shops, restaurants and its car parks as turnover at the airport went up by £7m to £121.2m.

The airport made £69.9m from commercial income, up 8.2 per cent. That was twice the growth of its income from charges to airlines, which was up 4.1 per cent to £51.2m.

Airport chief executive Paul Kehoe said: "Looking forward to 2015/16 we have continued to grow passenger numbers and broke the 10 million passenger mark in August 2015 for the first time. This year alone we have welcomed eight new airlines to Birmingham, as more and more carriers realise the strong business and leisure market in the Midlands region, and the airport's investment to offer a world-class facility."



Pan-tastic result for Liam, George, James and Archie getting ready for the Grand panto in Wolverhampton

Four boys flying high after landing roles in Peter Pan

FOUR West Midland boys have landed parts in Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's pantomime Peter Pan.

The roles of Wendy's brothers, Michael and John, will be played by the local lads who join a full professional cast for the festive season.

Archie Turner, aged eight, from Rowley Regis will play Michael alongside James Shaw, 11, from Bishopsworth as John. On alternate dates, eight-year-old George Passalacqua from Bromsgrove will play Michael while Liam Hewitt, 10 from Kingswinford will play John.

The four boys were chosen from open auditions held on stage at the Grand Theatre in August by the pantomime's director David Burrows and choreographer Steven Harris.

The pantomime opens on December 12.

The selection process included having to perform a rehearsed poem or monologue, and reading excerpts from the Peter Pan script.

Managing Director of Qdos Entertainment's pantomimes division Michael Harrison said: "We're absolutely delighted to welcome Archie, James, George and Liam to our company of performers, and know that they will have a truly memorable Christmas alongside our professional cast".

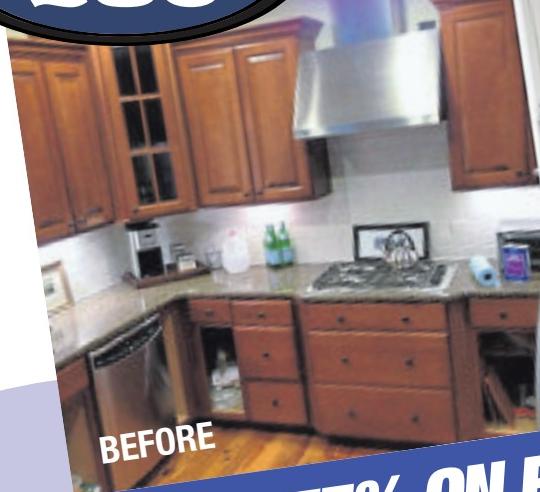
They will perform 37 shows each during the six-week run of the pantomime which stars The Chuckle Brothers as Paul and Barry Smeek and EastEnders' 'Nasty Nick' John Altman as Captain Hook.

The show will be produced by Qdos Entertainment, the world's biggest pantomime producer.

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Magic spell attempt led to blaze at man's flat

A LONELY man trying out a 'magic spell' in a bid to make new friends accidentally set fire to his flat in Dudley instead.

Duane Thurstance says he was given instructions at a magic shop to set fire to a life-size cardboard cut-out of a television character.

This he later did at his flat in Broad Street on July 25 last year. The 26-year-old who has mental health issues and cerebral palsy walked out of the building and failed to tell anyone what he had done, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told on Friday.

When the room erupted into flames, other residents in the block of flats were forced to flee to safety outside.

The property suffered £3,000 damage as a result.

Thurstance, who admitted an offence of arson reckless as to whether life was endangered at an earlier hearing, was found by police a short distance away from the scene after people in the area provided a description of him.

Candles

Mr Howard Seale, prosecuting, said: "He admitted that he had started the fire and told the officers he was practising witchcraft to obtain a friend."

"He started a fire so that an appropriate image would appear to him. That didn't happen so he left it."

"It was a life-size cardboard cut-out of a character from a TV series."

He told Wolverhampton Crown Court that at the time the defendant was

in breach of a community order for a robbery in 2013.

Mr Stephen Cadwaladr, defending, said: "This offence arose after he was told by people who should have known better at a magic shop, that the spell would help him to meet people he could call friends."

"It consisted of setting down candles in circles and burning a small photo of somebody in a pot placed in the middle. Needless to say it was not successful."

"He says he only intended to singe the cardboard cut-out."

"In this particular case I submit that his culpability is not very high. He is receiving effective treatment from two NHS nurses."

"He needs structure in his life and is getting that at the moment. His problem is that he is vulnerable."

Judge John Walsh said it was a 'troubling' case and sentenced Thurstance, now of Wilbraham Court, Moat Road, Walsall, to a three-year community order.

Aston la vista, baby, with Arnie in Brum

MOVIE star and former governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger is coming to Brum.

And for the price of £1,500, fans can meet the movie star and have a professional photograph taken with him.

The Terminator star will be the guest of honour at a black tie event at the International Conference Centre on January 21, where he will take part in an on-stage interview.

Ticket prices for the evening begin at £95 for entrance to the event and continue up to £1,500 for a three-course meal, drinks, the ability to meet other as-yet unconfirmed celebrities, as well as a professional photograph with the star and entrance to a 20-person only meet-and-greet session with the star.

A photograph alone with the star will set you back £545.

Arnie will be interviewed by a celebrity and will discuss his life and career as one of Hollywood's biggest stars.

'I blubbed like a baby but I'm still standing'

A PROUD son has created a touching video revealing how his father defied medics who told him he had just one year to live.

Adrian Webb was diagnosed with skin cancer in September 2012 after his wife Michelle noticed a mole on his back had changed colour.

In the video Adrian's son Josh, a 22-year-old deputy manager at Aldi, holds up cards explaining that the cancer spread to his father's lungs, spleen, liver, bowel and spine.

Doctors gave him a year to live, but he has beat the odds and has now pledged to raise £25,000 for Cancer Research UK to help others.

It initially gives the impression Adrian didn't make his 50th birthday this year, but the final clips show Adrian up and about with a card reading 'Thanks to research - I'm still standing' and he hugs his wife

and 19-year-old daughter Amelia.

The music distribution manager from Netherton credits trial drugs for keeping him alive so far.

He said: "The consultant said I might have as little as 12 months left. I blubbed like a two-year-old because I thought it was all over."

"Once I'd stopped blubbing I said OK what can you do for me? That's when they said that there might be a trial drug option."

So far Adrian has been given three drugs and been told his cancer has shrunk to a trace. He added: "I'm a very positive person. I have to see my daughter get a degree, I have to see both my children get married."

The Stand Up To Cancer fundraising initiative were so impressed with the film they have showcased it on their Facebook page, where it has been viewed more than 5,000 views.



Still standing — Adrian Webb with son Josh, 22, whose video celebrated his determination to survive

Motorway upgrade plans are 're-heated'

A £1.8 billion package of motorway improvements has been branded as 're-heating' old plans announced multiple times over the past five years.

Highways England unveiled 10 projects to cut congestion and improve journeys in the West Midlands at an event in Birmingham.

The schemes include:

Building the M54/M6/M6 Toll link road — first announced in 2003, revived in 2010 and funding committed in 2013.

Constructing two new bridges at junction 10 of the M6 at Walsall to widen the roundabout and create four lanes — announced in July last year by Chancellor George Osborne.

Upgrading the M6 junctions 13-15 from Stafford to Stoke to four lane 'smart motorways' with variable speed limits — first revealed in summer 2013.

M5 improvements between junctions 5 and 7 — announced in December.

Highways England regional director, Tim Harbott said: "These new schemes will bring huge improvements to journeys around the Midlands."

Record

"The Government has committed record funding to specific transport projects here so the Midlands can act as a transport hub for the entire country."

As Highways England, we're delivering what investment to help unlock billions for the economy by increasing road capacity, improving the flow of traffic and improving safety and accessibility for all road users."

But Warley MP John Spellar was critical, saying many of the schemes had been announced at least three times in the past year.

He said: "I am absolutely astonished that the transport department and their



John Spellar MP - astonished

companies are continuing to re-heat existing proposals and give the impression that they are new.

"Good hardy folk in the Black Country and West Midlands will not be fooled by this. We want less talk and more action. When will they learn?"

A Highways England spokesman said it was the first time the company, which has replaced the Highways Agency in April, had discussed details of the plans.

Officials met with suppliers to set out how the money will be spent to improve the roads.

In total, £600 million will be spent on maintenance, including £160m to resurface more than 900 miles of carriageway, £225m for repairing and renewing structures like bridges and viaducts, and £60m to improve vehicle barriers by 2020.

Bosses said they are yet to choose what route the M54/M6/M6 Toll link road will take.

For first-time buyers

THE Tipton and Coseley Building Society has launched a 100 per cent mortgage to help first-time buyers get on the property ladder. The Tipton's 100 per cent Family Assist mortgage has been designed to help those who don't have a deposit borrow up to 100 per cent of the property's purchase price, with a charge taken against a family member's property as security. It has a variable rate of 3.99 per cent.

Volunteers needed for diabetes support

DIABETES UK is looking for people in Dudley with Type 2 diabetes who are interested in helping to support others who also have the condition.

The charity is pioneering a new service called Type 2 Together, which will connect people who have Type 2 diabetes in local surroundings. Diabetes UK is seeking to recruit and train volunteers with Type 2 diabetes in Dudley to lead these relaxed, informal group sessions.

Peter Shorrick, Midlands Regional Manager for Diabetes UK, said: "We know that people with Type 2 diabetes can often feel worried or unsure about how best to manage their condition. The new service is all about helping people meet others who also have the condition, and supporting them to learn more about how to manage their diabetes better."

Would-be volunteers will need to be able to commit to a day of training and a few hours of volunteering each month. Diabetes UK will provide practical tools and a specialist educator to help support them.

To find out about volunteering, or to register, call 0345 123 2399 or email [Type2Together@diabetes.org.uk](mailto>Type2Together@diabetes.org.uk)

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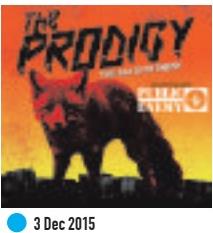
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Guest digs in for talk about bulbs

Cleint Gardening Club

AT the beginning of September the club held the Annual Cleint Flower Show in conjunction with Cleint WI and there was a splendid array of flowers and produce on display from club members and guests.

The WI members were not to be outdone with their own displays of cakes, preserves and crafts. A large number of parishioners and guests enjoyed the displays and next year it is hoped to hold a bumper show as it will be the show's 70th anniversary.

The club's monthly meeting in September welcomed guest speaker Dr John Page to give a talk on introducing bulbs. His talk was illustrated with a splendid array of photographs of bulbs flowering throughout the year both in the UK and beyond.

He gave advice on the cultivation and care of bulbs with different varieties requiring different levels of care and attention which was attentively received by his audience.

At the end of the meeting the chairman announced the results of the monthly competitions and reminded members that the next monthly meeting is on Friday, October 23 when Ingrid Millington will give a seasonal talk entitled Autumn in the Garden.

Meetings which are held at Cleint Village Hall on the fourth Friday each month.

Visit www.cleintgardeningclub.wordpress.com or call chairman Martin Grange 01562 883009 or 07917 184762 for more details.

Evening not to be missed for villagers

Sedgley Local History Society

Relating history of Lunar Society

Ambleside History Society

THE first Andrew Barnett & Trevor Genge Memorial Lecture takes place tonight (Thursday October 8) at 7.30pm in St Andrew's Church, Bilston Street, Sedgley. The speaker is Ned Williams the well known Black Country historian and author.

Ned explores the Gornals (the subject of his 50th book) and shares his warm affection for the villagers and their traditions. This illustrated presentation reflects a flavour of Black Country life still around, but fast disappearing.

For past and present Gornal folk it is an evening not to be missed.

As usual visitors are invited to come along – admission £1. Annual membership of the society costs £5 and gives free access to the programme of talks.

Schoolteachers Andrew Barnett and Trevor Genge were co-founders of the Sedgley Local History Society in 1984. Andrew launched the Sedgley Local History Museum, which closed in 2004, and Trevor published five books on the Sedgley Manor villages. Both were avid researchers and staunch supporters of conservation projects.

Odes on experience of life

MEMBERS and visitors met on September 23. The meeting began with the speaker Ken Gilkes whose talk was entitled Odes of Life and Laughter.

He began by saying how boring his life is and how he only knows what day it is according to which breakfast he is given.

This struck a chord with the group and then from start to finish the ladies never stopped laughing as he recited his odes,

MyTime Over Fifties

written in response to his experiences of life. MyTime Over Fifties meets in the Ambleside Room at Stourbridge Town Hall on the fourth Wednesday in the month. The next meeting is on October 28 when Linda Ellis will update the group on macular degeneration. For more details call Audrey on 01384 864223 or Graham on 01384 393499.

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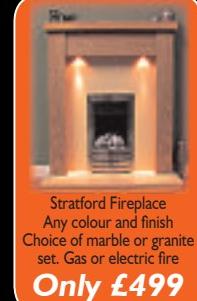
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Slimmer Kelly sets example

A WOMAN who shed eight stone in weight will be sharing her success and experiences with others after launching her own slimming class.

Kelly Sansome, 43, of Wynnall Lane, Wollescote, decided to take action following a terrifying experience where she struggled to breathe and had to be put on oxygen.

The mother-of-two was about to turn 40 at the time and weighed nearly 20st.

But after joining a slimming group at Dingle Community Centre, in Kingswinford, Mrs Sansome says she has never looked back.

She now weighs a much healthier 11st and says she is all the happier for it and has been inspired to help others achieve the same success via her own slimming class at Gigg Mill Primary School, in Norton.

THE man who branded the Black Country flag 'offensive' because of the connection between chains and slavery has been urged to apologise when he visits this weekend.

Historian Patrick Vernon is coming to Wolverhampton as part of Black History Month to give a talk on the Windrush generation of Caribbean migrants.

The London-based but Wolverhampton-born campaigner sparked fury in July when he branded the flag, designed by a 12-year-old Dudley schoolgirl to celebrate the Black Country's industrial heritage, as 'insensitive'.

Mr Vernon, who faced calls to hand back his OBE after sparking the row, will give a talk at Wolverhampton Art Gallery, before presenting a film about the life of Jamaican Second World War pilot Eddie Martin Noble at the Light House Media Centre the same day.

Sedgley UKIP MEP Bill Etheridge said: "Perhaps Mr Vernon can take the opportunity to learn more about Black Country history and understand the real relevance of the chain to the flag. It would not be amiss for him to apologise for the offence he caused." Ian Austin, Labour MP for Dudley North, said: "Perhaps while he is in the Black Country Patrick Vernon will see the deep sense of pride that people from all backgrounds have and see how this region lit the spark that fired the industrial revolution."

Mr Vernon, aged 54, said: "I am very familiar with the Black Country industrial heritage and history. If local people wish to learn more about the slave trade and its links with the Black Country, I would encourage them to visit the various archives and museums in Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton."

Puppy dog tale all over internet



Susan Nock with eight-week-old Ollie, who has become an internet superstar

A CUTE dog's tale of woe – combined with an adorable home video – has taken the internet by storm.

The 16-second clip of eight-week-old Bichon Frise, Ollie, has been viewed by more than 1.2 million people across the planet in a matter of days.

The short video shows the pup enjoying having his stomach rubbed.

Owners Chris and Susan Nock, from Stourbridge, only posted the video on Facebook after being told by vets that Ollie was fighting for his life.

Recovery

They were told he may not survive 48 hours – after falling ill just two days after his new owners had collected him.

A blood test revealed Ollie had E.coli and the pet has since made a full recovery.

Peer is tempted to run for mayor role

DIGBY Jones, one of the most prominent figures in British business has admitted he is "sorely tempted" by the idea of running as mayor of his native West Midlands.

But Lord Jones of Birmingham said the chances of putting himself forward as head of the region's new combined authority were currently no more than "five or ten per cent". He was talking during a business mini-conference on board the Queen Elizabeth cruise liner at the weekend, organised by Black County property tycoon Roy Richardson and his family.

Senior company executives and leading figures from the business community took part in a series of debates on the combined authority and what it could mean for the region.

Lord Jones said big metropolitan councils like Wolverhampton and Birmingham would need to give up powers to make the new authority effective "but turkeys don't vote for Christmas."

Bowling for charity

A BOWLING club has helped raise £300 for the victims of the Nepal earthquake.

Crystal Bowls Club, based at Stevens Park, in Wollescote, staged the event on September 17.

The event had a football theme with a penalty shoot out where all players tried to get their bowls between very small posts.

Organisers gave special thanks to Sainsbury's at Amblecote, Tesco and Waitrose in Stourbridge for donating prizes.

Call for flag comment apology during historian's visit to city

Tenants urged to get involved

RESIDENTS are invited to a housing conference in a bid to encourage more people to get involved in the running of their estates.

The Dudley Council housing conference, which is open to anyone living on the borough's council housing estates, will promote opportunities for tenants, leaseholders and residents to get involved in how housing services are delivered.

It will take place on October 29 at Saltwells Education Centre, in Bowring Green Road, Netherton. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. There will be speakers at the event.

For more information call (01384) 815168 or email participation@dudley.gov.uk

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Reading scheme returning

SANDWELL Council is set to launch a second year of a scheme designed to increase the number of youngsters who borrow books from its libraries.

The Booktastic project has helped to double the number of four and five-year-olds taking out books.

Council bosses say the scheme, which gives children in Sandwell library membership and access to free books, has helped bring more children into libraries than ever before.

The scheme was thought up Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children's services, who will launch it at Blackheath Library next Friday.

He said: "This is a first step towards getting children to read for pleasure."

"Statistics show children who read from a young age are more likely to do well in education."

Warning after bicycle thefts

PUSH bikes have been stolen in Blackheath prompting a police appeal for information and a warning to cyclists to remain vigilant.

Officers say bikes have been stolen from areas including Shepherds Fold and High Street in recent weeks.

Residents have been asked to be aware and report any suspicious activity.

Any witnesses are asked to call the police on 101.

Union and parents protest over proposed nursery cuts

DOZENS of parents have signed a petition opposing plans to cut provision at a nursery.

Rowley Owls Nursery, which is run by neighbouring Rowley Hall Primary School, has launched a consultation on proposals to change the care offered at the nursery.

This would include axing care for children up to two years old and getting rid of care outside of term time.

by David Cosgrove

Darren James said he was concerned, adding: "It's very disappointing that they want to do this."

"Why are they doing this now after getting a better Ofsted report than they had back in February?"

Changes to staff contracts could also leave some out of pocket to the tune of £2,000, according to Mr James.

Nicola Stanley, headteacher at Rowley Hall Primary, said: "Governors have put forward a proposal to change the way we run Rowley Owls Nursery in order to improve standards."

"At this stage it is just a proposal and we are conducting a consultation to find out opinions from all of our stakeholders."

"Our governors will take into account all views before coming to any decision about the future of the nursery."

GMB branch secretary



GMB Union Sandwell equality officer Sarah James with, from left, Gill Whittaker, Darren Jones and Stuart Harrison

More than 100 homes to be built

MORE than 100 homes, most of them four-bedroom houses, are to be built on the site of a former college in Rowley Regis.

The former St Michael's Business and Enterprise College site in Thorne Road will be demolished after councillors approved plans submitted by Redrow Homes to build 123 properties.

The building has been empty since the college moved to a new site in 2010.

Houses

Developers say 80 of the properties would be four-bedroom houses with 34 three-bedroom houses, plus nine would be flats.

Councillor Steve Trow said it was "great that the site was being brought back into use".

Sandwell Council unanimously approved the plan.

Bursary help for student

A ROWLEY Regis student is among three top students from the Black Country who have been given bursary awards by exam body OCR towards studying at the University of Cambridge.

Anoop Sumal, 18, who attended Sandwell Academy, will be reading medicine at Selwyn College.

Recipients of OCR bursaries receive £3,000 for each year of their undergraduate studies for living and/or tuition costs.

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Business pals help to furnish homes for veterans

TWO best friends from Brierley Hill have put their DIY skills to the test by lending a helping hand to veterans in Manchester — and their work can be seen on a popular TV show.

David Perry and Jamie Wood, from Stourbridge, were approached by DIY SOS to help them spend two weeks transforming streets in Newton Heath for former soldiers to move into with their families.

Reclaimed

The team behind the BBC programme, hosted by Nick Knowles, wanted to see whether the fledgling furniture company could help towards their latest project.

Refugees are human: Ex-target of Taliban

A MAN who fled the tyranny of the Taliban in Afghanistan has called on people to remember that there are human beings behind the numbers, in the midst of the Syrian refugee situation.

His comments came in the wake of some councils in the region asking for guarantees of further Government funding before taking on their share of 20,000 Syrians due to come to the UK.

The councils' concerns drew sympathy from Rohullah Yakobi, who was tortured in his native Afghanistan when he was just 12 years old.

The 28-year-old father of two, from Oxley, Wolverhampton, came to Britain in 2004 and now works with the Human Security Centre, a think tank in London.

He said: "It's entirely understandable that they may resist more people coming into their area, given the budgetary constraints councils are going through, particularly if an asylum seeker is not allowed to work and contribute."

"Some people arriving as I did will have no sense of Britishness and will have to find their own way."

"But I've never doubted the generosity of the British people and I'm delighted to be a British citizen myself."

"When we look at statistics and figures like this we do not see the human beings. We forget the human side of the crisis."

"What we're talking



Rohullah Yakobi — fled tyranny in Afghanistan

Island restaurant gets the go-ahead

MULTI-MILLION pound plans for a restaurant at Birchley Island in Oldbury have been given the green light.

The restaurant between the island and the M5 slip road will create 80 full-time and part-time jobs and will be part of the Greene King's Farmhouse Inn chain.

The site has previously been earmarked for a hotel and casino but both schemes failed to get off the ground.

The land will now be put into use after Sandwell Council gave planning permission to the restaurant scheme.

Developer St Modwen said work on the building work will begin next year.

The Farmhouse Inns chain of restaurants offer diners a daily carvery and are known for their large cakes. The scheme also includes a car park with 95 spaces.

The 13,811 sq ft restaurant will have two entrances to accommodate those visiting to enjoy a meal and those using only the bar.

In 2011, planning permission was granted for a casino and an 80-bed hotel on the site, which is bounded by the A4123 Wolverhampton Road to the south. The £6 million project ever got off the ground.



David Perry, left, and Jamie Woods, right, with the presenter of TV's DIY SOS Nick Knowles

Jail for motorist who almost hit runners

A DRINK-driver who drove onto a Birmingham 10K course run, narrowly missing runners, has been jailed for 14 months.

Unemployed Ibrar Shazad Boston, ignored marshalls at the Morrison's Great Birmingham 10k Road Race on May 3 and drove his blue Renault Megane over grass and a pavement. Police spotted Boston gesticulating at a council worker in a road sweeper who was blocking his path on Pershore Road. As motorbike officer approached Boston drove off at speed, narrowly missing runners and just missing the police bike. Boston drove through cones along Sherlock Street, before colliding with railings and abandoning the vehicle. He was arrested nearby.

The 35-year-old of Cooksey Road, Small Heath, pleaded guilty at dangerous driving and with excess alcohol at Birmingham Crown Court where he was banned from driving for over four years.



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Shrek's trek is one that cannot be ogre-rated

Shrek, The Musical
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
By Graeme Andrew

INGENIOUS costumes, amazing sets, belly laughs throughout and super music - Shrek rules!

William Steig's story of an ogre who finds love and friendship in a bid to secure his swamp after being overrun by ousted fairytale creatures, has translated brilliantly from the big screen to the musical stage.

Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre resounded with roars of uncontrollable laughter as we were whisked along on the road to Duloc and beyond, as Shrek and Donkey follow their quest to rescue Princess Fiona from the clutches of the dragon.

Amazing

With a host of new musical numbers to provide the narrative – showing off the cast's amazing vocal ability – the storyline closely followed the first Shrek film with a few hidden extras thrown in, to the delight of the crowd.

But the production really took off when Lord Farquaad was introduced into the proceedings. The staging

problem of representing his, erm, 'limited' stature was dealt with ingeniously, with hilarious results. And canny old-hand theatre stalwart Gerard Carey absolutely makes the most of it, inducing tears of laughter with his antics.

Certainly the star of the show when it comes to the comedy aspect, there were many stand-out turns – Bronte Barbe as Fiona was top class with an amazing voice, and she too showed a deft comic touch.

Dean Chisnall, in the lead, is given the hardest job, trying to carry off a central acting role while wearing a no-doubt cumbersome Shrek suit and make-up, but he did well, showing real vulnerability when required, both in song and acting.

And Idriss Kargbo had a hard act to follow with Eddie Murphy's unforgettable performance as Donkey in the movies, but he acquitted himself well, bringing a touch of Cat from Red Dwarf with him.

Ex-Eastender Nigel Harman (remember Dennis Rickman?), who won plaudits as Farquaad himself in the West End, is the director and keeps the action ticking over nicely.

Meanwhile musical director Dave Rose is obviously an accomplished vocal arranger, as harmonies were brilliantly executed and many of the characters proved their worth, bringing singing power to blow the audience away, in particular Christina Modestou with her soulful voice for Dragon. Mention must be made too on the staging, with swift scenery changes and amazing sets.

The supporting cast had to work hard taking on multiple roles and at no point did I find myself thinking we'd seen any of the faces in other guises.

Puppet

There must have been some super-rapid changes, including three people dressed in black bringing to life Dragon, as a huge puppet, which was remarkably close in appearance to the Dreamworks' movie original.

It's an old cliché – something for everyone – but on this occasion, one that fits the bill.

And with performances running until Sunday, there is still a chance for fans to get their fill of fairytale magic and laughter.



From left, Bronte Barbe, Idriss Kargbo and Dean Chisnall. Picture: Helen Maybanks

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One Direction



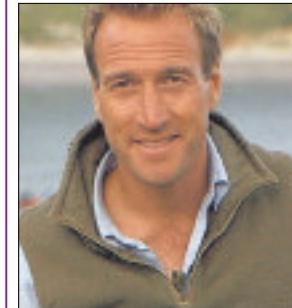
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Frankie Boyle: Hurt Like You've Never Been Loved
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Go West, Nik Kershaw, T'Pau

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The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, B16 8AE. Call 0121 643 5858

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Peace ready to make Civic happy

PEACE will give fans one last chance to see them on their Happy People tour before re-treating to the country.

The band from Worcestershire will line up at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall on Saturday. And then, they'll disappear for six months.

Frontman Harry Koisser says: "We're moving to a house in the middle of the countryside together and we're working on the new album immediately after the tour. So for the next six months we'll be working on the album."

"To be fair it's already all written we just need to record it. We want to rehearse it. Sometimes it takes a band five years to write a record and I'm just 'what are you doing?' It'll take me a week and a half to write a record."

Peace have had an incredible summer, playing Glastonbury for the second time as well as sets at Reading and Leeds.

"It's been fun. We started in Australia in March and it just seems like the longest summer and to be honest I just want winter."

The band have got celebrity followers with ex-England footballer Peter Crouch appearing in a video.

"Peter Crouch and Abby Clancy are big fans, which is really cool. I met Noel Gallagher in Scotland at T in the Park. We were introduced by someone and he was like 'Noel this is Harry' and he looked at me was like 'are you in a band or something?' and I said 'yeah I'm in a band called Peace' and he was like 'AHHHHH! PEACE!' And he said 'Craig Silvey'



Peace with Harry Koisser, centre front, are about to work on their third album

(producer of Peace's Happy People and Noel Gallagher's Chasing Yesterday) played me your album and it was amazing'. Noely G had just given me a compliment."

Harry can't wait to play Wolverhampton. "Wolverhampton Civic is a big deal to be honest. This is the

last tour we're going to be doing for what's going to feel a really long time. We love Wolverhampton, with exception of two members of the entire touring party (including support bands Yak and Splash), everyone's from the West Midlands. It's going to be a big celebration."

Tale of Anita and Meera too



Mandeep Dhillon (Meena) and Jalleh Alizadeh (Anita) rehearse for Anita And Me

It's strictly drag for Craig's musical role

LIFE'S become a bit of a drag for Simply Come Dancing judge Craig Revel Horwood, who is putting on the pantyhose to play Miss Hannigan in the revival of the Tomorrow musical Annie at Birmingham Hippodrome.

The choreographer and director returns to the stage for a role he shares with Birds of a Feather star Lesley Joseph when Strictly duties intervene on a Saturday.

The musical will be at the Hippodrome from October 13 to 31 — see www.birminghamhippodrome.com or call 0844 338 5000 — and returns to the West Midlands at a later date at Wolverhampton Grand with Lesley Joseph dishing out the Hard Knock Life.

Double date with 1980s hitmakers

POWER ballad 80s stars T'Pau have two local gigs. The China In Your Hand outfit fronted by Carol Decker are at Robin 2 Bilton tomorrow (Fri), and are guests of Go West and Nik Kershaw at Symphony Hall on Tuesday.

Key gigs include Treetop Flyers at the Sunflower Lounge in central Brum tonight (Thu), the same night Metric unveil album Pagans In Vegas at The Institute. Check out Rae Morris on Sunday and soul singer KWABS on Monday at The Institute. Gengahr are at the Hare & Hounds in Kings Heath on Monday, when Du Blonde and Goodbye Lenin play the other room.

The eyes have it for a Grand favourite

THE Grand's favourite pantomime, Ceri Dupree, returns with a tribute to the divas in EYEcons, the female impersonator's new show on Tuesday at the Wolverhampton theatre.

The Upbeat Beatles revive memories of the Fab Four at the Lichfield Street venue on Wednesday and Ministry of Science Live bring explosive experiments for matinee and evening shows on Thursday.

The week of one-nighters is rounded off by Britain's Got Talent opera star Paul Potts in concert on October 16 and a saucy Evening of Burlesque on October 17. See www.grandtheatre.co.uk or call 01902 429212.

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A real hot shot – the Vhujon in Bewdley



The shared starter comes with three Indian snacks



The Murgh Chettinad was sweet and spicy with a rich and hot sauce



The classy interior of the Vhujon

This restaurant is real hot stuff

PUBS, hairdressers and curry houses have dominated the small town centre of Bewdley over the years.

At one point you were spoilt for choice if you wanted to go for a swift pint, cut and blow dry or a spicy dinner.

But as time has passed and the recession has taken hold, some businesses have struggled to stay afloat and have fallen by the wayside.

It seems residents have tightened their belts and the Indian restaurants have taken a hit. At one point there were four restaurants within a 100-metre stretch, and a balti.

The old favourite that has stood the test of time is still going strong. The cheap and cheerful one, which I've never gone to. The modern-trying-to-be-posh option which has recently shut up shop, as has the bring your own booze balti. But then there's the Vhujon, a contemporary Indian with a stylish interior and a mix of traditional and more unusual dishes.

It's still there, still popular and is always

By Lisa Williams

busy enough to need to book a table on a Friday or Saturday night. It has a lively buzz with a chatty atmosphere in an intimate setting. Its contemporary furnishings make it look clean and fresh, although it could probably do with a bit of attention if they decide to give it a revamp.

We didn't book. We didn't think it would be packed. But for a Wednesday evening there was a surprisingly steady flow of diners which made the atmosphere nice. Relaxed and vibrant.

Wine was ordered as we contemplated menu. There was a lot to take in – starters, chicken, lamb, beef, seafood and biryani dishes along with tandoori specialities, vegetarian, balti and traditional. There are also veggie accompaniments, rice, naans and other sundries.

Of course we ordered poppadoms, a necessity. They were lovely. Crispy, crunchy discs with a slight oiliness. The condiments were yummy too. As we were devouring them our starter to share arrived – Sabzi

Labra, a trio of Indian snacks a samosa, onion bhajee and mushroom pakora, all of which were tasty. Each had a good amount of filling and was nicely seasoned. The pakora batter was a bright, eyewatering, neon orange and could have done with a bit more mushroom stuffed inside its glowing coat.

Once these were done and dusted our mains were next. Feeling brave I'd gone for the Murgh Chettinad, described as hot and spicy chicken cooked with a mix of onion, crushed red chillies and cranberries.

Fiery

It was hot but not take-off-a-layer-of-skin-from-the-roof-of-your-mouth kind of blazing. It had an almost sweet and sour flavour with the plump, rich cranberries giving a sharp taste to the chicken and the fiery chilli adding the taste explosion. To counteract the fierce heat I'd gone for a rather plain but very fluffy and perfectly cooked boiled rice along with a wholesome chapati to mop up the sauce.

My friend had gone for a classic chicken Madras with mushroom pilau rice. The Madras, she said, was nice and spicy but not

at all greasy. We'd also decided on a tarka dhal as a side which tasted absolutely divine, a nice smooth texture with a whole some lentil flavour and some seasoning we couldn't quite put our fingers on. It complemented the curry and was aromatic without being too overpowering. The mushroom pilau was also a hit.

Neither of us went for the customary naan bread as they seemed too heavy and filling with all the food we had to get through.

There was no room for dessert, though they did have quite a vast selection mainly of pre-made ice cream pots along with a couple of more traditional options.

The staff were friendly and attentive without being intrusive, kept the table cleared and made sure we had everything we needed. It's a very efficient and well-oiled machine with fantastic food.

The bill came with After Eight mints, very 70s but welcome to take away the heat, along with a little pot of minuscule liquorice torpedoes, pretty reasonable at just shy of £45. We decided this is one restaurant that certainly curries favour.

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CHOICE

BBC1



Peter Capaldi

Doctor Who
(BBC1, 8.25pm)

The concluding edition of a two-part tale – told in reverse – takes the Time Lord to a remote Army outpost, where a fearsome alien warlord known as The Fisher King sets in motion a devious plan to ensure his own survival. As his plot takes effect, the ripples of his actions are felt across the universe in what seems to be an unstoppable chain of cause and reaction. With the consequences spiraling out of control, the Doctor seeks to bring the devastation to an end - but doing so might mean he has to do the unthinkable. Sci-fi drama, starring Peter Capaldi and Jenna Coleman, with guests Paul Kaye and Peter Serafinowicz.

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00 Saturday Kitchen** Live. **11.30 Football Focus.** **12.00 BBC News:** Weather. **12.10** Live Formula 1: Russian Grand Prix – Qualifying. Suzi Perry introduces coverage from Sochi Autodrom (Showtime 1.00pm). **1.30 Bargain Hunt.** (R) **3.25** The Great British Bake Off Class of 2014. (R) **4.25** Escape to the Country. (R) **5.10** BBC News. **5.20 Regional Programme.** **5.30 Pointless Celebrities.**

6.20 Strictly Come Dancing. Strictly is nothing if not glamorous, but there are a few extra sparkles this week as the contestants take their inspiration from the silver screen in a movie-themed show-off, with Len Goodman, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcie Bussell deciding who is a blockbuster and who is a box-office flop. As ever, Tess Daly introduces the twinkle-toed stars, while Claudia Winkleman chats to them after their performances – and watch out too for the professionals, who will no doubt be kicking off the show off with a spirit.

8.25 Doctor Who. The concluding part of the two-part tale is told in reverse – takes the Time Lord to a remote Army outpost, where a fearsome alien warlord known as The Fisher King sets in motion a devious plan to ensure his own survival. As his plot takes effect, the ripples of his actions are felt across the universe in what seems to be an unstoppable chain of cause and reaction. With the consequences spiraling out of control, the Doctor seeks to bring the devastation to an end - but doing so might mean he has to do the unthinkable. Sci-fi drama, starring Peter Capaldi and Jenna Coleman, with guests Paul Kaye and Peter Serafinowicz.

9.10 Casualty. Cal finds himself back on an even keel, but it remains to be seen whether things will improve for him from here.

10.00 The National Lottery Live. The all-important winning numbers, including the Lotto and Thunderball draws, are revealed by Gaby Roslin.

10.10 BBC News: Weather.

10.30 Mrs Brown's Boys. A hypnotist provides the entertainment at the triplets' baptism – and Agnes soon finds herself under his spell. (R)

11.00 Film: Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides. (2011) Captain Jack Sparrow's search for the fountain of youth leads to a battle with the dread pirate Blackbeard. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp; National Lottery Update.

1.05 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.10 BBC News.**

BBC2

6.25 Formula 1: Russian Grand Prix – Practice One Replay. (R) **8.15 Formula 1:** Russian Grand Prix – Practice Two Replay. (R) **9.55 Live Formula 1:** Russian Grand Prix – Practice Three. **11.05** The Winter's Tale. Starring (R) **1.30** Great British Menu. (R) **2.30** Great British Menu. (R) **3.30** Formula 1 Rewind. **3.30** Coast. (R) **4.00** World's Weirdest Events. (R) **5.00** Flit It!

6.00 The Hairy Bikers' Northern Exposure. Si King and Dave Myers take DNA tests to find out if they have any Viking ancestry, before heading for Stockholm and taking a ferry to the island of Gotland. Last in the series. (R)

7.00 Gardeners' World. Monty Don tackles seasonal jobs at Longmeadow, while in the third of her films about how plants work, Carol Klein investigates the science of stems. (R)

7.30 Patagonia: Earth's Secret Paradise. Life in the treacherous seas that surround the 4,000-mile coast of the South American wilderness, including rockhopper penguins, seals and orcas. Last in the series. (R)

8.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring enlists an unusual recruit to the platoon. Variety comedy, starring John Le Mesurier. (R)

9.00 Ted Hughes: Stronger Than Death. Documentary examining how the poet's life shaped his work, including an interview with his daughter Frieda, as well as testimony from family members, friends and fellow writers.

10.30 Ol. Sarah Millican, Jason Manford and Bill Bailey join regular panellist Alan Davies as host Stephen Fry asks a range of unusual questions on the topic of keeps. (R)

11.00 Cradle to Grave. Danny finds himself at a crossroads with the fabuous Miss Blonder – or as he is now allowed to call her. Louise – and Fred demonstrates his keen sense of hearing with money. (R)

11.30 Boy Meets Girl. As the party preparations get under way, Pam learns the truth about Judy, while Leo has a special question to ask her. But things do not turn out as expected. Last in the series. (R)

12.00 Film: Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil. (1997) **2.25 Film:** Lady Caroline Lamb. (1972) **4.25 This Is BBC Two.**

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10 Bottom Knocker Street.** (R) **6.20 Dino Dan:** Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35 Dino Dan:** Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45 Signed Starling Share a Story.** (R) **6.50 Sooty.** (D) **7.00 Sooty.** (R) **7.25 Adventure Time.** **7.45 Marvel Avengers Assemble.** (R) **8.15 Hornet Hunt.** (R) **8.30 Thunderbirds Are Go.** (R) **9.00 Jessie.** **9.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA.** (R) **10.20 Countrywise.** (R) **10.45 ITV News:** Weather. **10.55 The X Factor.** (R) **12.55 Downtown Abbey.** (R) **2.00 Rugby World Cup:** Scotland v Samoa (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30 Rugby World Cup:** Australia v Wales (Kick-off 4.45pm).

6.55 Regional Programme: Weather. **7.00 ITV News:** Weather.

7.15 Rugby World Cup. England v Uruguay (Kick-off 8.00pm). John Inverdale presents coverage of the final match in Pool A, which takes place at Manchester City Stadium.

There has only been one previous meeting between these nations prior to this clash, which took place at the 2003 World Cup in Australia. That fixture was an incredibly one-sided affair, as England recorded an emphatic 11-13 triumph in what was also their concluding pool-stage match of that tournament. Anything other than an English win tonight will be seen as a huge surprise, and Steve Lomas' team will hope the executive victory proves to be as good an omen for the current side, given that the 2003 squad went on to lift the Webb Ellis Cup. With analysis from Jonny Wilkinson, Clive Woodward and Lawrence Dallaglio, and commentary by Nick Mullins and Ben Kay.

10.15 Through the Keyhole. Dave Berry, Michael Buuck and Ashley Roberts try to guess which mystery celebrities have invited Keith Lemon to poke through their personal belongings. Last in the series.

11.15 ITV News: Weather. **11.35 Rugby World Cup Highlights.** Action from Scotland v Samoa, Australia v Wales and England v Uruguay, which took place at St James' Park, Twickenham and Manchester City Stadium respectively.

12.50 Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofa.

3.00 Show Me the Telly. (R) **3.50 ITV Nightscreen.**

CHANNEL 4

6.35 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.00 The Grid.** **7.10** HM Superbike World Championship. **8.00 The Morning Line.** **9.00 Frasier.** (R) **9.30 Frasier.** (R) **10.00 The Big Bang Theory.** **10.25 The Big Bang Theory.** (R) **11.25 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **11.55 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **12.25 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **1.00 Come Dine with Me.** (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Newmarket and York. **4.10** Channel 4 News. **4.35 Couples Come Dine with Me.** (R) **5.20 Couples Come Dine with Me.** (R)

6.05 Location, Location, Location. Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer help prospective buyers in Cardiff, including Jo and Steve, who are relocating from Bristol to cut down on Jo's commute to work. (R)

7.00 Celebrity Benchmark. Vic Reeves and Jimmy Carr battle it out for the contestants' chair as Paddy McGuinness hosts another star-studded round of the game show. This week, the Benchmarkers are Joey Essex, Chris Ramsey, Lesley Joseph, John Thomson, Jason Byrne, Amanda Byram, Mark Watson, Edwina Currie and Stevie Ritchie, and the star who wins the opening duel must answer a series of tricky numerical questions if they hope to win £50,000 for their chosen charity.

8.00 Britain's Best Loved Sitcoms. Part two of the two-part sitcoms concludes and the nation's favourite sitcom is revealed. Tamzin格雷 narrows.

9.00 At Home with Steph and Dom. Steph and Dom show with the much-loved couple from Gogglebox, as they host a series of celebrity dinners at their plush B&B, The Salutation. Viewers get to see the couple entertain the likes of Jerry Springer, Jason Donovan, Louis Walsh and Phil Tufnell, finding our more about their guests in a succession of wine-fuelled and opinionated evenings.

10.05 Film: Tower Heist. (2011) The manager of an apartment complex recruits a thief to steal back his friends' pension fund from a Wall Street fraudster. Crime comedy, starring Ben Stiller.

12.10 Sex Diaries: Gigolos. (R) **1.10 Josh Widdicombe:** And Another Thing. (R) **2.05 Alan Carr:** Chatty Man; SU2C Special. (R) **3.00 Hollyoaks.** (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00 SpongeBob SquarePants.** **10.35 Cowboy Builders.** (R) **11.30 Cowboy Builders.** (R) **12.30 Cowboy Builders.** (R) **1.30 Film:** Columbus: Grant December. (1989) starring Peter Fonda. **3.25 Film:** Columbus: Ashes to Ashes. (1998) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk and Patrick McGoohan. **5.15** The Nightmare Next Door. (R)

6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Kevin Stokes and Brian O'Shaughnessy get into a doorstop confrontation with a debtor who wants to prove her family business is bankrupt. However, when tempers flare Brian is assaulted and the agents call the police. Elsewhere, Paul Bohill and Steve Pinner face evicting three properties owned by the same landlord in north London, and Brian and Delroy Anglin collect £2,000 debt owed to a vet in Kent. (R)

7.05 Funniest Fails, Falls & Flips.

Comedy clip show featuring pranks gone wrong, including martial arts, dating difficulties, and a wipe-out at the Typhoon Lagoon.

7.35 Funniest Fails, Falls & Flips. Comedy clip show featuring pranks gone wrong, including a man filling up his pick-up truck with water and schoolboys learning how gravity affects balls.

8.00 Now That's Funny! Amusing Internet-sourced videos, including pleasure seekers getting more than they bargained for at an amusement park and people who make fooling about at work an art form.

8.55 News Weekend.

9.00 Football League Tonight. George Mays extended highlights of the weekend's top matches from League One and League Two, including Sheffield United v Rochdale, Walsall v Burton Albion, Cambridge United v Portsmouth and Oxford United v AFC Wimbledon. Plus, a round-up of the main talking points and interviews with a selection of players and managers. Former Sunderland left-back Michael Gray provides analysis in the studio.

10.00 Most Shocking Talent Show Moments. Countdown of the most memorable moments from TV talent shows. (R)

12.50 The Gadget Show. (R) **1.40 SuperCasino.** **3.10 The Yorkshire Vet.** (R) **4.00 Body Donors.** (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00 Top Gear** **8.05** Don't Tell the Bride. **9.05 Russell Howard's Good News** **9.35 Film:** Tropic Thunder (2008) **11.15 Family Guy** **1.25** Together **1.55 Asian Provocateur** **2.25** Russell Howard's Good News **2.55** Don't Tell the Bride **3.55 Movie Mistakes** **V: Revenge of the Fifth** **4.00 Close**

BBC Four **7.00 Three Men Go to Scotland** **8.00 Burma, My Father and the Forgotten Armies** **9.00 Beck: The Hospital Murders** **10.25 Spike Milligan: Love, Light and Peace** **11.55 Top of the Pops:** 1980 **12.30 Music Misfits: The Story of Indie** **1.30 Indie Classics at the BBC** **2.30 Tales from the Tour Bus:** Rock 'n' Roll on the Road **3.30 Close**

ITV2 **11.00 The Cube** **12.05 Tricked** **1.05 The X Factor** **2.00** Aleasha Dixon. **1.20** The X Factor **3.20** The X Factor **4.20** Cabin Pressure **5.20** The Beethovens (1992) **7.05 Film:** She's the Man (2006) **9.10 Film:** American Pie: The Wedding (2003) **11.15** Celebrity Juice **12.05** The Almost Impossible GameShow **1.05 Release the Hounds** **1.55 Tricked** **2.45** Totally Bonkers **Guinness World Records** **3.00 Teleshopping**

ITV3 **12.15 Inspector Morse** **2.30 Film:** Emma (1996) **4.55 Lewis** **5.55 Doc Martin** **8.00 Midsummers Murders** **10.00 Lewis** **12.05 Agatha Christie's Marple** **2.05 ITV3** **8.00 Nightscreen** **2.30 Teleshopping**

ITV4 **11.00 Film:** Battle of the Bulge (1965) **3.00 Film:** Dunkirk (1958) **4.45 Film:** Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **7.30** Storage Wars: New York **8.00 Storage Wars: 9.00 Storage Wars:** New York **9.25** River Monsters **10.30** Euro 2016 Qualifier Highlights **12.00** Film: The Big Lebowski (1998) **12.20** Nitro Circus **3.00 Teleshopping**

ITV5 **1.00 Film:** Planet 51 (2009) **2.45 Rude (2006)** Tube Shorts **3.00** The Big Bang Theory **5.00 Rude (2006)** Tube **5.05 Film:** Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **7.30** Storage Wars: New York **8.00 Storage Wars: 9.00 Storage Wars:** New York **9.25** River Monsters **10.30** Euro 2016 Qualifier Highlights **12.00** Film: The Big Lebowski (1998) **12.40** The Inbetweeners **1.50** The IT Crowd **2.45** How I Met Your Mother **3.30** The Normal **3.55** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.00 Film:** Hellboy (2004)

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CHOICE



Claire Danes

Homeland (Channel 4, 9pm)

One of the most talked about American dramas of recent years is back for a new run, and life seems a little easier for Homeland's bipolar heroine Carrie Mathison (Claire Danes). When we first met her in 2012, she was trying to ascertain whether Nicholas Brody, the US soldier and POW, had been turned by al-Qaeda and was planning an atrocity on American soil. When we catch up with her, it's two years since the on/off CIA officer's tenure as Islamabad station chief. Series five sees her in Berlin, estranged from the CIA and employed as a German philanthropist's head of security. In episode one, Carrie's peace is threatened when a request from her boss forces her back towards the dangerous world she left behind.

BBC1

- 6.00 Breakfast. 9.00 The Andrew Marr Show. 11.00 Live Formula 1: Russian Grand Prix. 12.15 Sunday Politics. 3.20 The Great British Bake Off: The Final. (R) 4.20 Escape to the Country. (R) 4.30 Points of View. 5.05 Lifeline. 5.15 Songs of Praise. 5.50 BBC News.
- 6.10 Regional Programme.
- 6.15 **Countryfile**. Matt Baker joins wildlife photographer Gary Lomas in recording the annual red deer rut in Cheshire's Lyme Park, and meets a V actor who gave up showbusiness to become a National Trust Ranger. Helen Skelton goes looking for rare bats and visits a family who make bespoke gin. Tom Heaps investigates mental health issues in the farming community. James Wong makes quince jelly and Adam Henson reveals what makes Dartmoor sheep and ponies special. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.
- 7.15 **Strictly Dancing: The Results**. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman host the results show, as the judges choose between the two couples with the lowest scores.
- 8.00 **Antiques Roadshow**. Fiona Bruce and the team visit the Royal William Yard in Plymouth, where they cast their eyes over Lord Nelson's doorknobs, and a diamond necklace the length of a skiptape.
- 9.00 **From Darkness**. Another body is discovered, which seems to have been left as a message for Claire. Norrie heeds and Claire are being dragged apart, as personal and professional issues collide.
- 10.00 BBC News.
- 10.20 Regional Programme.
- 10.30 **Sir Alex Ferguson: Secrets of Success**. Former BBC Political Editor Nick Robinson interviews the retired Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson, who shares his perspectives on motivation, discipline and leadership.
- 11.30 **Rooney: The Man Behind the Goals**. Gary Lineker presents a profile of England's all-time leading scorer, talking to the Manchester United striker, his family and a host of people from the world of football. (R)
- 12.30 Weather for the Week Ahead. 12.35 BBC News.

BBC2

- 6.45 **The Instant Gardener**. (R) 7.30 Countryfile. (R) 8.30 Gardeners' World. (R) 9.00 The Beechgrove Garden. 9.30 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. 11.00 Great British Menu. (R) 12.00 Great British Menu (R) 13.00 How the West Was Won. 1.05 Film: How the West Was Won. (1962) 2.30 Film: It! Trading Secrets. (R) 4.00 The Railway. Keeping Britain on Track. (R) 5.00 Rugby League: Super League Grand Final Highlights.
- 6.00 **Don't Panic - How to End Poverty in 15 Years**. Professor Hans Rosling explores the target of eradicating worldwide poverty by looking at dramatic human stories, as well as examining data on recent global progress. (R)
- 7.00 **Licence to Thrill - Paul Hollywood Meets Aston Martin**. The Great British Bake Off's Paul Hollywood indulges his passion for Aston Martin cars, test-driving various models, and making an attempt to join one of Aston's racing teams. (R)
- 8.00 **Earth's Wildest Waters: The Big Fish**. New series. Ben Fogle presents a fishing challenge in which anglers test their skill in the world's most inhospitable areas. The contestants fish the freezing waters of Iceland.
- 9.00 **Britain's Ultimate Pilots: Inside the RAF**. New series. Documentary following the Red Arrows, the RAF's aerobatics display team through a summer display season, including an ambitious performance over Buckingham Palace.
- 10.00 **Family Guy**. Brian goes to obedience classes.
- 10.25 **Family Guy**. Meg becomes infatuated with a popular boy at school.
- 10.45 **Family Guy**. Peter tells the story of Christmas – with a twist.
- 11.05 **Top Coppers**. Mahogany meets one of his childhood heroes when the star of a hit sci-fi show receives death threats, and Rust decides to chase fame and fortune by becoming an actor. Previously seen on BBC Three.
- 11.35 **Film: Chances Are**. (1989) A man reincarnated without memories of the past starts to recall his former life when he unwittingly meets his daughter. Romantic comedy, with Cybill Shepherd.
- 1.20 **Sign Zone: Countryfile**. (R) 2.20 **Holby City**. (R) 3.20 This is BBC Two.

ITV

- 6.00 **CITV: Bottom Knocker Street**. 6.10 Bottom Knocker Street. (R) 6.20 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Tree Adventures. (R) 6.45 Signed Starling Shanty Storm. (R) 6.50 Soddy. (R) 7.05 Film: Hooked. 7.10 Film: Battle Chasers. 7.45 Marvel Avengers Assemble. 8.15 Horrid Henry. 8.30 Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) 9.00 Horrible Science. 9.25 Murder, She Wrote. (R) 10.25 The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) 11.20 **ITV News: Weather**. 11.30 **Rugby World Cup**. Argentina v Namibia (Kick-off 12.00pm). 2.10 **Rugby World Cup**, Italy v Romania (Kick-off 2.30pm). 4.20 **Rugby World Cup**. France v Ireland (Kick-off 4.45pm).
- 6.50 **Regional Programme**; Weather.
- 6.55 **ITV News: Weather**.
- 7.00 **The X Factor**. Olly Murs and Caroline Flack present the climax of the Six Chair Challenge. Judges Rita Ora, Simon Cowell, Cheryl Fernandez-Versini and Nick Grimshaw must each select six acts to take a place in the live shows. However, contestants who put in an impressive performance are not out of the woods, as the judges have the freedom to change their minds at any point in the show.
- 9.00 **Downton Abbey**. Tom and Sybbie return to Downton, but the peace is disrupted by an unexpected visit from an old friend. Baxter is faced with a dilemma after an encounter with Sergeant Willis, while Thomas is forced to sell off his son's shoes. Anna goes to London with Mary to deal with a crisis, while her secrets seem likely to be exposed. Daisy is not happy with Cora, and Mary has an admirer.
- 10.00 **ITV News: Weather**.
- 10.15 **Rugby World Cup Highlights**. Martin Bayfield presents action from the final four pool-stage matches, which were France v Ireland, Argentina v Namibia, Italy v Romania and USA v Japan.
- 11.15 **Film: Predators**. (2010) Hardened fighters from across the globe are taken to an alien jungle planet to become prey in a big-game hunt. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Adrien Brody and Topher Grace.
- 1.00 **Film: Animal Kingdom**. (2010) An orphaned teenager is adopted into his grandmother's criminal family, and must decide where he wants to fit in. Co-starring with James Frecheville and Guy Pearce. 2.50 Come Dine with Me. (R) 4.35 Fifteen to One. Sandi Toksvig hosts the general knowledge quiz, in which 15 contestants test themselves against their rivals. (R) 5.25 1001 Things You Should Know. Journalist and presenter Jon Snow and interior designer Celia Sawyer are among the experts challenging three more contestants. Presented by Sandi Toksvig. (R) 5.55 **How I Met Your Mother**. Barney seduces Marshall's professor. (R)

CHANNEL 4

- 6.20 **How I Met Your Mother**. (R) 6.45 **How I Met Your Mother**. (R) 7.10 **How I Met Your Mother**. (R) 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.30 **Frasier**. (R) 9.00 **How I Met Your Mother**. (R) 9.30 **CSI: Crime Scene Investigation**. (R) 12.30 **Film: Step Up**. (2010) Dance drama sequel, starring Rick Malambri. 2.35 **Film: Lemon Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events**. (2004) Comedy adventure, starring Jim Carrey. 4.40 **A Place in the Sun**. Winter Sun. 5.40 **Home by the Sea**. (R)
- 6.35 **Channel 4 News**.
- 7.00 **Film: Men in Black 3**. (2012) An alien criminal escapes from a prison on the moon and has back in time on a mission of revenge, changing the course of history. Agent J of the top-secret Earth defence organisation follows him back to 1968, and joins forces with a younger version of his mentor. Agent K sets things right. Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Will Smith, Josh Brolin and Tommy Lee Jones. Edited for language and violence.
- 9.00 **Homeland**. New series. Having left the CIA, Carrie tries to get on with her new life in Berlin but realises she is now the one who is a target and no longer has Saul and Quinn to rely on. Thriller, starring Claire Danes.
- 10.00 **Experimental**. Tim Shaw builds a giant catapult to fire Buddy out of and a propelled swivel chair. The duo also head to Georgia to carry out a dangerous stunt testing the science of acceleration.
- 11.05 **Film: Predators**. (2010) Hardened fighters from across the globe are taken to an alien jungle planet to become prey in a big-game hunt. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Adrien Brody and Topher Grace.
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CHANNEL 5

- 6.00 **Milkshake!**: Peppa Pig. 6.05 **Bananas in Pyjamas**. (R) 6.20 **Angelina Ballerina**. (R) 6.30 **Pip Ahoy!**. (R) 6.45 **Ticket Toc**. (R) 6.55 **Chloe's Closet**. (R) 7.05 **Make Way for Noddy**. (R) 7.20 **Paw Patrol**. (R) 7.30 **Sharkness**. (R) 7.45 **Wanda and Aliens**. (R) 8.00 **Zack and Quack**. (R) 8.15 **Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom**. (R) 8.45 **Jelly Jamm**. (R) 8.50 **LazTown**. (R) 9.15 **Dora and Friends**. (R) 9.45 **SpongeBob SquarePants**.
- 10.20 **Access**. 10.25 **Football League Tonight**. (R) 11.25 **Film: Hoodwinked**. (2005) Animated comedy, with the voice of Anne Hathaway. 12.55 **Film: Tinker Bell and the Lost Treasure**. (2009) Animated adventure, with the voice of Mae Whitman. 2.30 **Film: Tuck Everlasting**. (2002) Disney fantasy, with Alexis Bledel. 4.10 **Film: The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement**. (2004) Family comedy sequel, starring Anne Hathaway.
- 6.25 **5 News Weekend**.
- 7.00 **Film: Men in Black 3**. (2012) An alien criminal escapes from a prison on the moon and has back in time on a mission of revenge, changing the course of history. Agent J of the top-secret Earth defence organisation follows him back to 1968, and joins forces with a younger version of his mentor. Agent K sets things right. Sci-fi comedy sequel, starring Will Smith, Josh Brolin and Tommy Lee Jones. Edited for language and violence.
- 9.00 **Homeland**. New series. Having left the CIA, Carrie tries to get on with her new life in Berlin but realises she is now the one who is a target and no longer has Saul and Quinn to rely on. Thriller, starring Claire Danes.
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- 11.05 **Film: Predators**. (2010) Hardened fighters from across the globe are taken to an alien jungle planet to become prey in a big-game hunt. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Adrien Brody and Topher Grace.
- 1.00 **Film: Parker**. (2013) Première. A thin, betrayed and left for dead by his wife, a criminal is forced to return home to avenge his wife. They are planning a diamond heist in a wealthy neighbourhood, so poses as a millionaire wanting to buy a house in the area. A real-estate agent sees through the disguise and helps him get even by stealing the gems from his traitorous gang. Action thriller, with Jason Statham and Jennifer Lopez. Edited for language.
- 11.25 **Film: Layer Cake**. (2004) A cocaine dealer planning to go straight is sent to find a mobster's drug-addicted daughter and a stolen shipment of Ecstasy. Crime thriller, with Daniel Craig and Michael Gambon.
- 1.25 **SuperCasino**. Live interactive gaming. 3.10 **Super Skyscrapers**: Building London's Cheesegrater. (R) 4.00 **House Doctor**. (R) 4.25 **Make It Big**. (R) 5.45 **Angels of Jarm**. (R)

DIGITAL

- BBC Three**
- 7.00 **Formula 1 – Russian Grand Prix Highlights**. 8.00 **Gear 9.00 Russell Howard's Good News**. 10.00 **Film: Scream (1996)**. 11.45 **Family Guy**. 12.25 **American Dad!**. 12.50 **Father Guy**. 1.10 **Together**. 1.40 **Asian Provocateur**. 2.10 **KKK: The Fight for White Supremacy**. 3.10 **Russell Howard's Good News**. 3.40 **Dead Air**. 4.00 **Close**
- BBC Four**
- 7.00 **The Search for Life: The Drake Equation**. 8.00 **Simon Armitage in Conversation with Tony Harrison**. 9.00 **Return to Larkhall**. 10.00 **The Sky at Night**. 11.00 **Death Row: The Coming of Sophie Lancaster**. 11.15 **Twin Sisters: A World Apart**. 12.15 **Film: Stoneville Buck – The Real Horse Whisperer**. (2011) 1.40 **Simon Armitage in Conversation with Tony Harrison**. 2.40 **Black Roses**: The Killing of Sophie Lancaster. 3.25 **Close ITV3**
- 11.45 **The Almost Impossible Gameshow**. 12.45 **Catchphrase 1.30** **The Very Best of You've Been Framed!**. 2.35 **Film: Stormbreaker**. (2006) 4.25 **Film: Hotel Transylvania**. (2012) 6.15 **Film: Hulk**. (2003) 9.00 **The Xtra Factor 10.00 Film: Casino Royale**. (2006) 12.55 **Vip Tap Records**. 1.40 **Totally Bonkers** **Guinness World Records**. 2.00 **Kesha: The Hot Desk**. 2.10 **Teleshopping**. 5.40 **ITV2 Nightscreen**
- ITV3**
- 12.25 **Lewis**. 2.25 **Agatha Christie's Marple 4.25 Film: The Prince and the Showgirl**. (1957) 6.50 **Foyle's War 9.00 Sunday Night at the Palladium**. 10.00 **Birds of a Feather**. (1981) 11.00 **Death Becomes Her**. (1992) 1.35 **Agatha Christie's Marple 3.10** **ITV3 Nightscreen**. 3.40 **Emmerdale**
- ITV4**
- 6.30 **British Superbike Championship Highlights**. 7.30 **Rugby World Cup**. USA v Japan (Kick-off 8.00pm). 10.20 **Film: Invictus**. (2009) 1.00 **Film: The Dead Pool**. (1988) 2.55 **ITV4 Nightscreen**. 3.00 **Teleshopping**
- E4**
- 2.20 **Rude(ish) Tube Shorts**. 2.30 **Couples Come Dine with Me 4.35** **The Big Bang Theory**. 9.00 **Film: GI**. (The Rise of Cobra) (2009) 11.20 **The Inbetweeners**. 12.30 **The IT Crowd**. 1.35 **Rude Tube 2.35 Rules of Engagement**. 3.20 **2 Girls**
- Film4**
- 11.00 **Bugsy Malone**. (1976) 1.00 **Anastasia**. (1997) 2.55 **Pride and Prejudice**. (2005) 5.25 **Evolution**. (2001) 7.25 **The Animal**. (2001) 9.00 **Apocalypse**. (2006) 11.40 **Joy Ride**. (2001) 1.40 **Dogtooth**. (2009) 3.40 **Close**

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Sat 10th Oct

The Jents

Pop/Rock

Sun 11th Oct

Terry Clark Band

Blues/Jazz/soul

Fri 16th Oct

Lucas D & the Groove Ghetto

Funk/Soul

Sat 17th Oct

Quad Rocks

Pop/Rock

Sun 18th Oct

Ann Duggan Band

Rock/Blues

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

The Good Witch's Gift, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Cassandra Nightingale's fiance proposes and they decide to get married at Christmas – leaving very little time to prepare for the big day. However, their marriage is threatened when a face from the groom's past arrives in town. Family drama sequel, starring Catherine Bell, Chris Potter and Laura Bertram. (2010)

TUESDAY

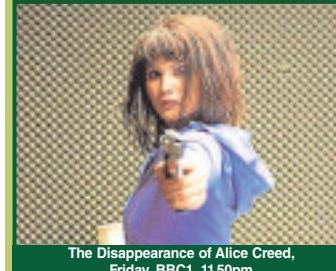
Good Witch, Bad Witch, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Cassandra Nightingale runs for mayor and considers starting a family, while also receiving a visit from her estranged niece. While seemingly helpful and friendly, the newfound relative is secretly jealous of Cassandra's perfect life and seeks to turn her friends against her. Fourth in the drama series, starring Catherine Bell and Matthew Knight. (2011)

WEDNESDAY

Client Seduction, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A lawyer who has made her career defending wealthy clients decides to perform an act of charity by representing a homeless man accused of murder. However, as the case gets under way, she realises the defendant is guilty, and that he is seducing her daughter as part of a plot to avoid justice. Thriller, starring Ally Sheedy and Rhys Ward. (2014)



The Disappearance of Alice Creed, Friday, BBC1, 11.50pm

THURSDAY

Tombstone, Channel 5, 10pm

Renowned marshal Wyatt Earp becomes a professional gambler in the town of Tombstone, but is forced out of his retirement to take on a gang of hellraising villains no one else is prepared to stand up to. Joining forces with his brothers and drunken gunslinger Doc Holliday, he gets ready to face them in a showdown at the OK Corral. Western, starring Kurt Russell, Val Kilmer and Bill Paxton. (1993)

FRIDAY

The Disappearance of Alice Creed, BBC1, 11.50pm
Two criminals kidnap the daughter of a wealthy family, with the intention of demanding a ransom. However, the hostage is not the helpless victim she appears. Thriller, with Gemma Arterton, Eddie Marsan and Martin Compston. (2009)

River banks on success in his latest murder case

Given the BBC's passion for Euro thrillers such as *Spiral*, *The Killing* and *Wallander*, it was inevitable that we'd see more dramas mixed the best talent from here and there.

And when it comes to A-list Scandinavian talent, you don't get much better than Stellan Skarsgård.

Okay, some of his dad dancing in *Mamma Mia* may have been questionable, but his string of credits, from *Good Will Hunting* and the US version of *Girl With The Dragon Tattoo* have helped make him one of Hollywood's go-to guys when searching for Swedish talent.

Here he plays John River, a brilliant but troubled police officer, while Nicola Walker almost steals the show as his late colleague, Detective Sergeant Jackie 'Stevie' Stevenson, a lover of cheesy music and fast food.

When a murder suspect jumps to his death while being pursued by River, the pressure and scrutiny that surrounds him escalates fast.

As the investigation into Stevie's murder begins to reveal her deepest

secrets, our hero has to question everything he thought he knew about his friend.

Stellan admits it's not the easiest of dramas to sum up.

"If it was a normal TV series it would be rather easy to tell you about it but it's not and that's why I'm in it," he explains. "You could say it's a crime story on the surface, but it's really more about a person's breakdown or his psychological status."

All brilliant TV detectives need a gimmick, whether it's Fitz's gambling or Ironside's wheelchair, and John River's selling point is his fractured mental state.

"We've heard a lot about people that hear voices, but he actually sees those people as well that he's talking to, and very often it's victims of crime that pop up and have conversations with him. They're not like ghosts, they're his own creations."

Penned by acclaimed writer Abi Morgan, one of the brains behind *Shame*, *The Iron Lady*, and new movie *Suffragette*, her script was a

key reason the actor signed up.

"I took the job for her writing because it doesn't look like anything else," explains Stellan. "Her writing is not linear. It's more filled with odd impulses."

"It throws you from one thought to another thought in a less organised way, and to me that resembles life much more than a lot of the writing you get which is extremely structured and polished and is by the book of 'How to Write a Screenplay.'

Obviously cast and crew are hoping the series proves a hit, but as four of Skarsgård's recent films grossed more than \$4 billion between them, and with more helpings of Thor and *Avengers* on the way, finding time to make series two might be a little tricky.

However, with a fine supporting cast, including Adeel Akhtar as Detective Sergeant Ira King; Lesley Manville as Chief Inspector Christie Read, and Eddie Marsan as a killer who harasses the eponymous crime buster, hopefully this is one River that will run and run.



Stellan Skarsgård stars in *River*, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

The Great British Bake Off - Masterclass

BBC2, 7pm

If you're one of the millions of viewers who have spent the past few weeks marvelling over *The Great British Bake Off*, then the likes of Nadiya Jamir Hussain, Tamal Ray and Ian Cumming have become minor yet worthy TV stars. Chances are their skills in the GBBO tent may have inspired you to dig out that dusty cake tin and have a go at your own adventures in the kitchen. Of course, inspiration is one thing, but good, solid guidance doesn't hurt either, and that's where this series comes in handy. Proving they know what they're talking about, no-nonsense judges Paul Hollywood (aka 'the male judge') and Mary Berry take over the tent to demonstrate how the contest's challenges should be done with a series of tutorials.

TUESDAY

Girls to Men

Channel 4, 10pm

Channel 4's *Born in the Wrong Body* strand, which explores the lives of young transgender people in Britain and America, continues. This time, the spotlight falls on the experiences of three young Britons, who have opted to undergo extraordinary surgical procedures to fulfil their dreams of living as

men. Making use of unprecedented access to the operating theatre, the film outlines the surgeons remove breasts and craft functioning penises for their patients. The documentary also explores the confident online community of young trans men, who have started to bare all on social media.

WEDNESDAY

The Apprentice

BBC1, 9pm

New series. Alan Sugar begins his 11th search for a new business partner, offering the hopefuls a £250,000 investment in a new start-up company. This year, Claude Littner replaces Nick Hewer as Lord Sugar's new advisor and 'eyes and ears' alongside Karen Brady. As usual, the millionaire gives the candidates his introductory pep talk, after which the entrepreneurs are divided into teams for the first task – selling two fish-based products to hungry Londoners. The pressure to perform is on, and the contestants are reminded of just how unforgiving the process is when they arrive in the boardroom, where the challenge is picked apart and one candidate is fired.

THURSDAY

George Clarke's Amazing Spaces

Channel 4, 8pm

Two sheds have got to be better than one, right? Well, not for a couple featured in this week's programme. Their garden has been the home of two air raid shelters for more than 70 years. These structures are showing their age, and now the owners want to turn them into rather swanky

sheds – the problem is, they can't agree who will take charge of which. Hopefully George can mediate for them. Also appearing is Guinne who, at the tender age of 12, is the series' youngest-ever designer. She's getting help from her builder dad to turn a book-based school project into a reality. Meanwhile, master craftsman Will Hardie

visits a beach hut worth £1 million and continues work on his and George's rather more modest project; George himself takes another trip to Germany to see how a water tower has been turned into a luxury home.



The Apprentice, Wednesday, BBC1, 9pm

modest project; George himself takes another trip to Germany to see how a water tower has been turned into a luxury home.

FRIDAY

TFI Friday

Channel 4, 8pm

New series. Chris Evans follows up his one-off edition aired in June, with the first of a brand new series of the lively entertainment show mixing music and chat with stunts and skits, proving that the 'farewell-to-all-that' nature of the previous offering was a little premature. Despite ongoing commitments to Radio 2 and now BBC Two's *Top Gear*, the host has managed to find time to schedule eight new programmes into his diary, and it will be interesting to see whether the unpredictable, wild nature of the former incarnation can be replicated on an ongoing basis.

Piers Morgan's Life Stories

ITV, 9pm

Warwick Davis, who stands at 3ft 6, talks to Piers about his life and career, which includes supporting roles in both the Harry Potter and Star Wars films. The actor and presenter opens up about the struggles he and his wife Sam faced when starting a family.

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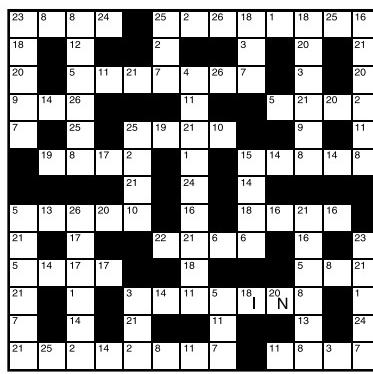
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BRAIN GYM

No.346

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
D	G	F	Q	S	H	W	Y	E	O	V	A	L
K	Z	C	M	X	B	I	N	R	T	J	U	P
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Quiz

- In which year did The Independent newspaper launch in the UK?
- Who was Australian P.M. from 1949-66?
- Who was Foreign Secretary in the 1974-6 Wilson government?
- Which composer wrote the ballet *Billy The Kid*?
- Which dwarf planet was discovered in 1930 by Clyde Tombaugh?
- Who was the Roman goddess of the dawn?
- Between which two islands is the Denmark Strait?
- What is the Arabian camel also known as?
- Which Italian modern art movement was initiated by Marinetti?
- Who wrote the novel Washington Square?

- Last week's solutions:**
Quiz: 1 John Adams; 2 Tigris;
3 Konstantin Chernenko; 4 Paul Dukas;
5 A hooped petticoat; 6 William Schwenk;
7 1956; 8 Charles de Gaulle; 9 St. Andrews;
10 A revolving tray for holding condiments.
Niner: DISCOVERY

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

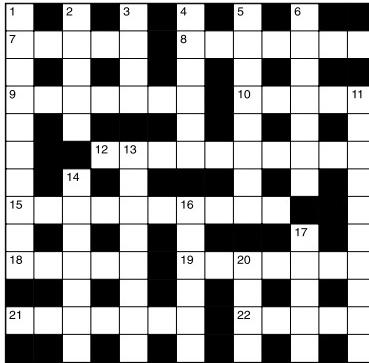
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- To erect or bring to the ground, we hear (5)
- Away from home to view the prospect (7)
- Runner allowed in different heat (7)
- Military body - almost a dead one! (5)
- Cattle drover - or store-keeper? (8)
- It's not wrong to mete out punishment (7)
- Thrifty result of revising coal income (10)
- & 18A. Do they sell fingers for watches? (6-4,5)
- See 15 Across
- Keeping your head down for immersion (7)
- Business enterprise produces anxiety (7)
- Indicate the policeman's duty (5)

Down

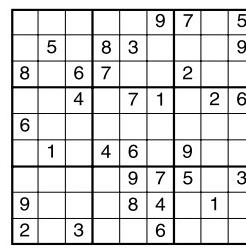
- Radio engagements for extensive groups of actors (10)
- Having drunk too much in need of relaxation? (5)
- By Jove, she'll be found among the bearers! (4)
- Up-to-date style by the Royal Navy (6)
- Cattle drover - or store-keeper? (8)
- It's not wrong to mete out punishment (7)
- What a monopolistic fishmonger has! (4,6)
- Care isn't used when container is upset (8)
- The tale of a nobleman, we hear (7)
- Not revealing chastisement (6)
- I'm twice returning to the capital of China to take off (5)
- Successfully handle clerical vestment (4)



Quick Clues:

- Across**
- Compel (5)
 - Fatty (7)
 - Specimen (7)
 - Boundary (5)
 - Nonconformity (10)
 - Star-gazer (10)
 - Spare (5)
 - Good health (7)
 - Food principle (7)
 - Position (5)
- Down**
- Womanish (10)
 - Big (5)
 - Aid (4)
 - Bets (6)
 - Force out (8)
 - Note (7)
 - Intruder (10)
 - Solitary (8)
 - Post (7)
 - Affront (6)
 - Kingly (5)
 - Kind (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

9	6	8	3	4	2	1	7	5
7	3	5	9	1	8	2	6	4
1	4	2	6	7	5	8	9	3
3	9	4	5	8	7	6	2	1
8	2	1	6	9	3	4	5	7
5	7	2	4	6	8	1	3	9
4	5	9	8	6	1	7	3	2
6	7	3	4	2	9	5	1	8
2	8	1	7	5	3	9	4	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Conspires; 8 Ram; 9 Drop of water; 11 Pattern; 12 Rinse; 13 Reform; 15 Serene; 17 Irons; 18 Instead; 20 Night-porter; 22 Odd; 23 Solitaire. Down: 2 Oar; 3 Phone; 4 Rowing; 5 Set free; 6 Arrangement; 7 In the lead; 10 Out of bounds; 11 Perdition; 14 Resigns; 16 Knob; 18 Stooge; 19 Quicksand; 21 Courting; 8 Below; 9 Reopened; 11 Breather; 12 Errant; 13 United; 15 Renown; 17 Draws; 18 Elevate; 20 Earmessness; 22 Sin; 23 Determine. Down: 2 Ode; 3 Tract; 4 Heeded; 5 Precede; 6 Deteriorate; 7 Coherence; 10 Predicament; 11 Boundless; 14 Ensured; 16 Revert; 19 Enter; 21 Son.

Thinking space



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Extended and detached residence is impressive



A SPACIOUS residence, 199 Wolverhampton Road, Sedgley has been improved and extended and is for sale through Skitts at £275,000.

With gas central heating, double glazing with coloured glass windows and doors it has three reception rooms plus a garden room, a fitted kitchen with a built-in double oven, hob and cooker hood and dishwasher, plus a laundrette with a useful cloak room.

On the first floor are three double bedrooms, a bathroom with separate bath and shower cubicle and stairs leading to the useful attic room.

There is off-road parking for numerous vehicles with gated access leading to two separate garages, a garden room, garden store and delightful garden. The property also has stunning panoramic views to the rear.

Contact Skitts on 01902 686868 or visit the website at www.skitts.net



Open day chance to view stunning home

An open day is being held at 44 St James's Road, Dudley, on Saturday with interested parties invited to make an appointment.

This impressive and exceptionally spacious double-fronted traditional detached family residence is for sale through Connells at £399,999.

There is also a generous 20ft living room, breakfast kitchen fitted with a vast range of units and integrated appliances and an island, stable door to a charming formal dining room, stairs to a galleried landing with French doors to a large roof terrace with far-reaching views, four double bedrooms, a luxury bathroom, 30ft garage/utility room and a large enclosed rear garden. To book a viewing slot contact (01384) 214770.



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NEW

HALESOWEN, Cavalier Drive £925 pcm+ Fees
An unfurnished 1st floor flat within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre and buses to Birmingham and Cradley Heath. This large house features a lovely living room, dining room, downstairs w.c., study, fitted kitchen, four bedrooms, master bedroom with en suite shower room, front & rear gardens, double garage and driveway parking. The property can be available earlier than the advertised date. EPC: C



BRIERLEY HILL, Gayfield Avenue £775 pcm+ Fees
Superb modern & totally refurbished 4 bedroom detached house on this very popular estate. (Withmoor Village) Featuring an entrance hall leading to study room, downstairs w.c., large lounge with separate dining room, fitted kitchen with 'Country Chef range cooker, 3 double bedrooms & 1 single, family bathroom with shower, garage & driveway. Not to be missed!! EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Blackberry Lane £750 pcm+ Fees
A superb 2 bedroom detached house with separate annexe to rear, fully refurbished to a high standard comprising of 2 reception rooms, fitted breakfast kitchen, guest w.c., 2 double bedrooms, shower room, gas central heating, double glazing. Not to be missed. EPC: G



HALESOWEN, Atwood Street £650 pcm+ Fees
Large spacious corner end terrace requiring internal inspection and comprising: hallway, 2 reception rooms both with feature fireplace, downstairs 4th bedroom, attractive re-fitted kitchen with fitted range cooker, gallery landing with 3 double bedrooms off, attractive bathroom with corner suite and separate shower cubicle, garage and pleasant courtyard. Available Now. EPC: F



HALESOWEN, Sanderson Place £650 pcm+ Fees
Luxury living in Hayley Green. A superb ground floor apartment offering spacious accommodation including open plan lounge/kitchen and diner, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, further well appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. EPC: B



HALESOWEN, Maynard Avenue £575 pcm+ Fees
This unfurnished mid terraced property is ideally located for local shops and bus links into Birmingham City Centre and Stourbridge. The property features lounge, modern fitted kitchen, downstairs w.c. 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower over bath. Also benefits from double glazing, gas central heating, rear garden and driveway parking. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Talbot Street £575 pcm+ Fees
1 MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! A fabulous newly renovated mid-terrace house with conservatory, new alarm system, new roof, new 'A' rated Bosch boiler, gas central heating, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, 1 single, 2 reception rooms, fitted bathroom, shower, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, 3 bedrooms, rear garden, on road parking. Ideally located a short distance from local shops, Cradley Train Station and the number 9 bus route. Available Now. EPC: E



ROWLEY REGIS, Client View £550 pcm+ Fees
A fantastic opportunity to rent a new build property on a selected development. This 2 bed end terrace is finished to an exceptional standard. The property features a large lounge/diner, modern kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, 1 single, 2 reception rooms, fitted bathroom and ensuite shower room, rear garden, on road parking for 2 cars, double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: D



TIPTON, Stanton Grove £550 pcm+ Fees
Modern semi-detached house in a quiet cul-de-sac position featuring a nice sized garden to the rear. Fitted kitchen/diner, 2 double bedrooms, master with fitted wardrobes & en-suite shower room & family bathroom, parking for 2 cars. Available immediately. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Whitehall Courts £525 pcm+ Fees
Centrally located to Halesowen Town Centre is this well presented 1st floor flat with private entrance, hallway, kitchen with appliances, living room, bathroom with newly fitted shower, 2 good size bedrooms, communal garden & secure parking to rear of property. Available Now. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Hope Street £495 pcm+ Fees
A fully refurbished ground floor apartment having spacious lounge, refitted kitchen with integrated oven and hob, 2 bedrooms, refitted bathroom and newly fitted carpets. The apartment has a garage and gardens to front and rear, full double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: C



SELDLEY, Tudor Vale £495 pcm+ Fees
Located in this ever popular cul-de-sac is this end mews house, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted dining kitchen, downstairs WC, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, driveway parking, unfurnished. EPC: C



ROWLEY REGIS, Mildred Way £495 pcm+ Fees
A beautifully presented and located in a quiet road, is this unfurnished split level semi detached bungalow, briefly comprising of: 1 gallery bedroom with bath in wardrobe, downstairs bathroom with shower, modern fitted kitchen, double glazing, rear garden, driveway parking. EPC: E



TIPTON, Ferguson Drive £480 pcm+ Fees
A lovely modern 2nd floor apartment which will benefit from a new internal re-decoration before the commencement of a new tenancy. Featuring 2 bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, loft space, electric storage heating, double glazing, 2 allocated parking spaces, communal gardens, internal viewing recommended. Deposit £750. EPC: C



NETHERTON, Round Street £475 pcm+ Fees
Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi-detached house. Featuring gas central heating, living room, fitted kitchen, 1 double and 1 single bedroom, house bathroom with shower, rear garden and driveway parking for 2 cars. In very popular area and good transport links for Perry Hill. 2 MONTHS DEPOSIT AND A GUARANTOR REQUIRED. (THE GUARANTOR MUST BE A HOME OWNER, FAMILY MEMBER AND WORKING) EPC: C



OLDbury, Causeway Green Road £425 pcm+ Fees
Deceptively large and spacious. A split level apartment above local shops, within walking distance to bus links for Langley Green, Halesowen and Birmingham. Features gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, parking to rear, with the added bonus of a porch, unfurnished. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Apperley Way £425 pcm+ Fees
Available on a well sought after estate is this unfurnished 1st floor apartment which is well presented throughout, within a modern style building. Features gas central heating, spacious living room, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, 1 bedroom with built in wardrobes, communal drying area. EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, Trinity Street £395 pcm+ Fees
House share in a large Victorian semi-detached home. Large furnished double bedroom available in this lovely period house. Kitchen, bathroom and large lounge are all shared facilities, wi-fi broadband. Rent to include all bills. 2 people sharing will be £100 pcm extra. Available now. EPC: E



HALESOWEN, Leasowes Court £390 pcm+ Fees
An unfurnished 1st floor flat within walking distance to Halesowen and buses to Cradley Heath and Birmingham. This apartment has been re-carpeted and re-decorated and features living room, modern kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower. Benefits include allocated parking, communal gardens, electric heating. EPC: TBC



LYE, High Street £385 pcm+ Fees
Located in the centre of Lye at Lye Cross. This split level flat above shops features a large lounge, kitchen with a dining area, 2 double bedrooms and a single bedroom, bathroom with shower, its own private garden terrace area, and is available immediately. EPC: TBC



LYE, High Street £330 pcm+ Fees
Located in the centre of Lye at Lye Cross. This 2nd floor flat above shops features a large lounge, kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower, and is available immediately. EPC: TBC

PROPERTY

Improvements blend with original features



THIS traditional detached property in Spies Lane, Halesowen, combines modern improvements with original character.

It is for sale through Taylors at £299,995 with no chain. It has a charming entrance hall, two good reception rooms and an extended kitchen with integral appliances, a ground floor WC. There are three bedrooms (one en suite) and a bathroom with shower cubicle. There is a large garage with electric doors and landscaped rear garden.

Contact Taylors on 0121 5503978 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk



Extended family house with a kitchen diner



AN extended three-bedroomed family home in Eggington Road, Stourbridge, comes with a re-fitted kitchen/dining area.

Also with a garage and off-road parking for several cars, it is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £329,950.

With gas central heating and double glazing, it has an entrance hall with original parquet floor, a WC, a lounge with a diamond shaped window, leaded bay window and a feature fireplace. There is a sitting room with wooden floor and French doors, an integrated dishwasher, washing machine, tumble dryer, cooker space, ceramic flooring. Bedroom one has wardrobes, there are two further bedrooms and re-fitted bathroom with shower over bath and heated towel rail. Contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 5856667 or visit www.hickshadley.com



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NO UPWARD CHAIN - DELIGHTFUL EXTENDED 5 DOUBLE BED DETACHED HOME IN CUL-DE-SAC LOCATION. Comprises of Entrance porch, entrance hall, study, downstairs WC, lounge/diner, conservatory, 23ft breakfast kitchen with separate utility, Ensuite to master, driving to front and large rear garden. UPVC DG, GCH, EPC Rating D

QUINTON

£375,000



HALESOWEN ROAD, HALESOWEN

EXTENDED & REFURBISHED detached family home. Lounge diner leading to EXTENDED REFITTED breakfast kitchen/family room, hall/study & D/S WC/Bathroom. 4 bedrooms, family bathroom. Garage & LARGE driveway. Extensive lawn rear garden. GCH & UPVC DG. EPC rating: TBC

QUINTON

£325,000



FLORENCE ROAD, SMETHWICK

EXTREMELY SPACIOUS, modern, DETACHED, convenient position, with Gas radiator heating, double glazing, having spacious Lounge, dining room, fitted breakfast kitchen, utility, downstairs shower room, 7 BEDS (Beds 1 and 2 with shower room en-suite), 2 further bathrooms, GARAGE, rear garden. NO UPWARD CHAIN. MUST BE VIEWED. EPC D.

BEARWOOD

£325,000



LONG LANE, HALESOWEN

NO UPWARD CHAIN - SUPERB spacious DETACHED CHARACTER COTTAGE. Study, kitchen/diner, family room, lounge and DWC/shower room. Gallery landing, 4 DOUBLE beds, ENSUITE & bathroom. LARGE rear garden. REFURBISHED to a high standard. UPVC DBG, GCH, EPC rating TBC.

QUINTON

£275,000



GREENHILL ROAD, HALESOWEN

NO UPWARD CHAIN - EXTENDED detached family home with 25ft lounge diner, REFITTED 18ft breakfast kitchen & downstairs WC. 3 GOOD SIZE bedrooms & REFITTED family bathroom with shower also. GARAGE & driveway. GCH & UPVC DG. EPC rating: D

QUINTON

£169,950



CHESTNUT ROAD, OLDBURY

EXTENDED home with driveway. 26ft lounge/dining room, separate sitting room. EXTENDED kitchen to rear. 2 bedrooms, bathroom & sep WC. Gas central heating, UPVC double glazing. Rear garden with sunny aspect. EPC rating: TBC

QUINTON

£159,950



CHICHESTER DRIVE, QUINTON

SPACIOUS home with 17ft UPVC CONSERVATORY to rear. LANDSCAPED garden backing onto local park - open views. 12ft kitchen and 19ft lounge diner. 3 bedrooms, bathroom & WC on 1st floor. GCH & UPVC DG. EPC rating: E

QUINTON

£149,950



ARDEN ROAD, SMETHWICK

DELIGHTFULLY PRESENTED, spacious, END TERRACED PROPERTY, conveniently situated, truly requiring inspection, with Gas radiator heating, double glazing, having 2 GOOD SIZED RECEPTION ROOMS, re-fitted kitchen, re-fitted bathroom, 3 BEDROOMS, re-fitted shower room, pleasant garden, OFF ROAD PARKING AT REAR. EPC tbc.

BEARWOOD

£139,950



HIGHFIELD LANE, QUINTON

NO CHAIN - Quality REFURBISHED home with GARAGE & blockpaved drive. REFITTED Kitchen/diner (integrated appliances), lounge, 3 bedrooms, REFITTED family bathroom. UPVC DG, GCH fitted. Rear garden with patio & lawn. EPC rating: TBC

QUINTON

£140,000



KITWELL LANE, BARTLEY GREEN

End terraced home on CORNER PLOT position - scope for extending. 17ft kitchen diner leading to UPVC CONSERVATORY. 14ft lounge & d/s WC. 3 GOOD SIZE bedrooms & bathroom on 1st floor. UPVC DG & GCH fitted. DRIVEWAY to front. EPC rating: D

QUINTON

£134,950



SOUTHFIELD ROAD, EGBASTON

Deceptively spacious, intermediate terraced property, CONVENIENT FOR GAINING ACCESS TO BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE, having gas radiator heating, with 2 RECEPTION ROOMS, kitchen, 2 DOUBLE BEDROOMS, spacious bathroom, good sized loft space, rear garden. EPC E.

BEARWOOD

£94,950



REGENT COURT, HALESOWEN

NO CHAIN - 1st floor flat with GARAGE & communal parking. Fitted kitchen & lounge diner. 2 DOUBLE bedrooms, bathroom, separate WC. UPVC Double glazing. Close bus routes into Birmingham City Centre. IN NEED OF UPDATING & IMPROVEMENT. EPC rating: TBC

QUINTON

£89,950



STANLEY ROAD, OLDBURY

EXTENDED home with GARAGE & driveway. 14ft lounge & separate 13ft dining room. EXTENDED 12ft breakfast kitchen to rear. 3 bedrooms & family bathroom on 1st floor. Gas central heating & majority UPVC double glazing. Lawn rear garden. EPC rating: E Ref: D1589

D1589

£170,000



FRANKLEY AVENUE, HALESOWEN

EXTENDED semi-detached home with DRIVEWAY in CUL-DE-SAC position. NO UPWARD CHAIN. L-shaped large lounge diner & REFITTED kitchen 3 bedrooms & REFITTED bathroom. Part GARAGE & parking to the front. Lawn garden to rear. GCH & DG fitted. EPC rating: C Ref: D1624

QUINTON

£169,950



BALDWIN STREET, SMETHWICK

NO UPWARD CHAIN - MODERN 3 bed home with fitted kitchen & lounge diner to rear. Master bedroom with EN-SUITE, 2 further beds & family bathroom. DRIVEWAY & gardens. EPC B. BEARWOOD OFFICE

BEARWOOD

£168,000

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6
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Giving rivals run for money

By John Griffiths

Kadjar . . . it's an unusual name which will make you think. And that's good for Renault because its new model is certainly worth a second look.

For the Kadjar is big brother to the Captur, Renault's first crossover which in three years has become Europe's best-seller in the highly competitive b-segment SUV market.

The new car is based on the larger Megane platform, as is its close relation the popular Nissan Qashai which ironically will be one of its main rivals.

It has chunky yet aerodynamic styling, the interior space and practicality of an estate car and, on top specification models the option of all-wheel drive. Plus it has that high, 'command' driving position which is one reason SUVs now account for 27 per cent of all sales for this size of family car.

While beauty is in the eye of the beholder, the new Kadjar has curvy, contemporary styling with its origins unmistakable.

It's also roomy, with space for five adults (including six-footers in the back) plus one of the biggest cargo boots in its class.

But it's clear Renault, as something of a late-comer to the market, is once again out to capture sales from rivals such as the Qashqai and Kuga as prices are very competitive.

There are 18 versions costing from £17,995 to £21,695 which, like for like model is up to £2,000 less than its rivals, and along with a thrifty range of engines will also impact on tax bills for company drivers.

When you first get behind the wheel of a Kadjar it conveys the feeling that this is a big car, and a well equipped one too (starting with the ultra clear virtual instrument display).

The seats (back as well as front) are soft and sculpted, while the high seating position and large areas of glass – including a 'third row' window in the c-pillar – offer outstanding visibility. Within seconds, you feel this is a nice place to be: it is a 'feel good' car.

There are two diesel options, a 1.6 litre 130Ps version which packs plenty of punch and a 1.5 litre which still performs well on the road but is more economical, capable according to official figures of averaging 74.3mpg with either six-speed manual or automatic gearboxes, with a tax-busting 99g/km of CO₂ emissions. The 130Ps engine has an advantage for acceleration and overtaking but, on two-wheel drive models, still results in an average 65.7mpg and a low 113g/km of CO₂.

You do soon appreciate the hefty 320Nm of torque at a low 1,750rpm, which means the 130Ps-equipped Kadjar pulls strongly in every gear for relaxed but satisfying driving.

Balanced against its greater economy, the lower-powered 1.5 litre diesel loses out a little on acceleration, but it still does 0 to 62 in under 12 seconds. Perhaps more relevant to most drivers, it cruises at motorway speeds with a quiet and relaxed demeanour.

If you want the four wheel drive option, this is only available with the higher specification versions and the 130Ps diesel.

There is a three-position selector button – 'auto' for slippery roads when the electronics split the torque between front and rear axles according to conditions, 'lock' which puts the system in full-time four wheel drive if you venture off-road and the third option of front wheel drive only, to save fuel in normal road driving.

The petrol option sounds tiny for a car of this class – just 1.2 litres – but it is Renault's already proven turbocharged power plant. It's been revamped to produce a faster pick-up and response, and with 130PS matches the typical two-litre, normally aspirated petrol engine of just a few years ago.

While the Kadjar is relatively tall, with the



advantages of visibility and ease of access, suspension and steering are tuned primarily for road use which make it feel as nimble as a typical saloon or estate rival.

There's no sense that this is an SUV with harsh, long travel suspension, and the electric power steering is progressively weighted so you can turn in with confidence and precision, and without any anticipation of unsettling body roll. The power steering and big wheel arches allow a tight turning circle of well under 11 metres, which combined with the all-round visibility make the Kadjar easy to handle around town.

The car has already been awarded a maximum five stars for safety, and comes with a range of features from six airbags to stability, traction and understeer control systems, hill start assist, ABS and emergency brake assist..

As you go up the range and price ladder, other features such as parking sensors, lane departure warning and automatic parking assist systems are available,

Inside, the Kadjar's virtual instrument display are a model of clarity, with all models getting a seven-inch touchscreen display for audio, communications and other functions including navigation, where fitted.

The 190mm ride height does allow four wheel drive Kadjars to venture off hard-surfaces, and 4x4 models also get front and rear skid plates to protect the bodywork.

After its success in the marketplace for smaller crossovers, Renault has plenty of reasons to be confident that Kadjar can do the same against established rivals in what is, to them, a new sector.

A modern, trendy-looking and roomy car

with all the attributes that attract such a large number of drivers to the SUV sector is a good place to start, to say nothing of engines offering a good balance of performance and economy. And, of course, that competitive price tag which will have some rivals nervously biting their nails.

And Kadjar? Well, after over a century of car making it must be a) tough to find a name no one else has used and b) in a global market one which doesn't translate into something terribly embarrassing in another language (yes, we all know one or two of those).

So the official explanation is 'kad' is inspired by quad (something driven by four wheels or legs) and 'jar' from the French word jaillir which means to emerge quickly.

Hence a word for an agile four wheel drive vehicle . . .

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Motorhome adventure

By Paul Naylor

Earlier this year I enjoyed my first experience at the wheel of a motorhome. Never one to do things by half, I opted for a rather sizeable vehicle for a novice – the Swift Lifestyle 686.

Coach-built utilising the new generation Fiat Euro 5+ Chassis Cab, the 130bhp/2.3 litre engine provided plenty of pulling power for the close to seven metre in length motorhome.

I found the Lifestyle 686 surprisingly easy to manoeuvre. Its power steering is light and responsive and the gear ratios very similar to my own car, with the added bonus of a sixth gear.

There is a rear window, but if you do ever find yourself at the wheel of a motorhome, I can't recommend enough the brilliant optional extra that this model had.

A rear camera acts as the mirror. The image, super-imposed over the actual rear view mirror, provided a natural feeling of added safety.

There is of course, as you would expect these days, a reversing camera too.

The updated 2015 model comes with a host of additional features including running lights and a new smart construction with a strong, moisture proof PURe polyurethane timberless framed body shell.

A new fully integrated touch screen console has a great satellite navigation system as well as DAB radio, CD and MP3 player with bluetooth. The DAB aerial is concealed in the mirror.

Drivers will be delighted to hear that the captain's chairs have integrated headrest, wider backrest, better side support and improved seat comfort.

I was particularly taken by the aesthetics of the 686. It's new metallic black cab and colour coded bumper give it a sleeker appearance, easily distinguishing it from the passing 'white-van man'.

For added comfort, automatic cab air-conditioning is included and the tyre pressure monitoring system is sure to become a must have.

Add to the mix an external shower point – ideal for muddy boots – and barbecue point, for those wanting to eat out in style, and you have a fantastic vehicle ready for all occasions.

Contemporary

The Lifestyle 686 has a superb interior. Finished in tasteful biscuit and cream hues, when dressed in its daytime mode it is reminiscent of a contemporary static caravan.

To the front of the vehicle, situated just behind the cab, a kitchen area includes fridge with small freezer box, microwave, oven and hob.

Opposite is a dining area, ideal for four people. To the rear is the lounge, with ample space for the 686's maximum occupancy of six.

An additional table means you have dining options to the front and rear of the vehicle.

As you would imagine, storage space is cleverly integrated throughout, with nooks and crannies, plus under-seat compartments allowing you to take plenty of clothing on your adventures.

The bathroom is a good-size, with a moulded shower and vanity wash basin and chemical toilet adding to the comfort of any off-the-beaten-track stay.

And speaking of such things, the disposal of the chemical toilet waste – and indeed waste water from showering and washing the dishes – is both discreet and easily done.

My children were big fans of the awning.



'With so much to offer it truly is a great choice for families looking to hit the road.'

The winding mechanism and easy to construct legs gave the 686 added kudos, making it twice as wide on completion and way more versatile.

We found converting the 686 at night time easy too. If you need to sleep six there is space for two above the cabin and two further double beds can be converted from the dining area seats and lounge area.

Privacy can be added using a combination of blinds and curtains.

With so much to offer it truly is a great choice for families looking to hit the road for many a motorhome adventure.

The Swift Lifestyle 686 is available at dealerships throughout the UK now with a recommended on the road price of £47,584.

To discover more about leisure vehicles go along to the Motorhome & Caravan Show, at the NEC, October 13-18. Visit www.motorhomeandcaravanshow.co.uk

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Safety group welcomes plan to lift fit to drive age

Road safety and breakdown cover specialist GEM Motoring Assist welcomes the news that the Department for Transport is considering raising the age at which drivers must declare they are fit to drive from 70 to 75.

GEM chief executive David Williams said: "This is a sensible step, however we question the road safety value of any such age-related declaration. Reaching a specific birthday doesn't automatically lead to sudden deteriorations in judgement and eyesight, so we believe that making a formal declaration on fitness to drive at 70, 75 or any age is unnecessary bureaucracy and of little or no road safety benefit."

"We regularly remind all our members – of any age – that they should not drive if they are unfit to do so."

"We encourage all senior drivers to stay mobile as long as they're safe, and we commend the responsible attitude demonstrated by the vast majority of older motorists to self-regulate."

Figures show that senior drivers are a very safe group of road users, according to David Williams. "This is because most are good at altering and adapting their driving to reflect any changes in their ability to drive safely," he explains. So they may avoid driving at night or in bad weather, they may cut down the length of journey they make, they may explore alternative transport methods and ultimately they will themselves decide that the time has come to stop driving.

"Inevitably there are a few senior drivers who make the headlines when poor decisions lead to horrible crashes."

"These are likely to be the ones too proud to heed the warning signs, and too stubborn to listen to advice. According to research, these represent around 10 per cent of senior drivers, and we fully support any safety measures that will identify them and deny them the use of the road."

GEM's 'Still Safe to Drive' website (www.stillsafetodrive.org.uk) is a video-based resource with an excellent line-up of expert advice on safer driving into old age.

There are also tips for concerned family members on how to talk to an elderly relative about reducing risk on journeys.

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Good day for runners in villages challenge

IT was another red letter day for Dudley Kingswinford Running Club with Ben Foster taking first place in the inaugural Two Villages 10k race.

Over a testing course, starting and finishing at Enville Hall and taking in some testing climbs around Kinver, Foster was ahead by more than a minute at the finish coming in at 36.53.

Daniel Maskew of Wolverhampton & Bilton was second in 38.16 and West Bromwich Harriers Gurmal Dehl took third in 38.32. DK's Darran Bishop was fourth in 39.51 winning his age group.

Helen Tromans finished runner-up in the ladies race in a PB of 42.54 only 16 seconds behind the winner Victoria Wilkinson of Cheltenham & County Harriers with Louise Collins taking third in 44.26.

There were plenty of other DK on show with Graham Wildgoose taking 35th in 45.47, Rebecca Warren 48th and fifth lady in 47.34, John Andrews finishing in 50.36, Karen Doy in 51.44, Carol Fisher in 52.07, Lynn Sprague in 52.12, Jacqui Elson-Whittaker in 53.33, Andy Freeman and Traci Gaunt both came home in 1:00.15, Sally McConvil in 1:03.34 and Debbie Richards in 1:04.54.

The autumn marathon season kicked into gear with athletes travelling to Chester for the classic distance. Matt Biggs finished 25th in 2:48.18, Lorna Hulme was 200 and 15th female in a PB of 3:13.11, Tahir Yasin finished in 4:02.55, Russell Fox in 4:09.04 and Andy Weaver in 4:09.51.

DKhad a representative in their novel metric Marathon, a 26.2k with Charlotte Tonks in 2:52.58.

Irvine is now free to find a new position

ALBION have reached a deal with Alan Irvine to terminate the former head coach's gardening leave.

Irvine, sacked last December by the Baggies, was still being paid monthly under the terms of his dismissal and as a result unable to seek employment elsewhere.

But after an approach by the club through the League Manager's Association, Irvine has accepted terms which will enable him to return to the game.

The Scot, who has been heavily linked with the vacant managerial position at Dundee United, said: "I'm delighted to have reached a settlement agreement with West Bromwich Albion and I'm now free to look for my next challenge." I really enjoyed my time being a manager with West Brom, just as at Preston and Sheffield Wednesday."

Yeltz can't break the stalemate

Halesowen Town 0 Whitby Town 0

HALESOWEN recorded their first drawn game of the season after failing to find the net in what turned out to be a goal-less stalemate.

With Whitby more than happy to claim a rare away point and Halesowen lacking invention up front, a drab draw started to look inevitable from early on with the moribund game producing just a few half chances until the final 10 minutes but neither side could ultimately come up with the goods.

Halesowen's Isaac Cooper struck a 25 yard shot just inches over the bar in the 11th minute before home goalkeeper Dan Platt pushed away a 13th minute direct free-kick from Matthew Waters at

the base of his post. The evenly matched sides still lacked enough attacking ambition to break the deadlock after the interval.

The game proved bereft of entertainment until the 64th minute when Cooper crossed dangerously along the Whitby goal which was one of few opportunities for the shot-shy Yeltz.

The best chance of the game finally arrived in the 82nd minute when a direct free-kick from Whitby captain Mark Robinson was tipped over the bar by home goalkeeper Platt.

Whitby goalkeeper Shane Bland then pushed away a low shot from Cooper which was coming in at the foot of his post before beating away another Cooper

effort in the dying seconds of the what was a disappointing and scoreless draw.

Halesowen Town: Platt; Connolly, Cooper, Denny (c), Hull, Elvins, Charlton, Bragoli, Reffell, Pearson (Griffiths 75), Hales (McGee 90).

Subs Not Used: Morrison, Gueyes, Sargeant (GK)

Whitby Town: Bland; Shepherd, Robinson (c), Bullock, Hassan, McTiernan, Martin, Gell, Roberts (Brobbel 77), Waters (Brown 69), Mason (Gardiner 87).

Subs Not Used: Charmey, Weledji.

Referee: Ian Smedley Attendance: 377

Hales hold strong against Sandbach

Old Halesonians 27 Sandbach 17

FROM the kick-off the visitors showed their intentions and after only six minutes breached the unusually slack Hales backline for an early converted try.

The home side gradually took a grip but only in phases.

The Hales front row of Louis Padian, Pete Fitzgerald and skipper Rich Taylor were dominant in the tight scrum, providing adequate ball for the backs.

The Hales backs, led by man of the match Ben Barkley, grabbed a well-taken try by fly half Oli Rayner, converted by Chris Hooper.

Sandbach came back again, this was to be the theme for the whole game.

Hales mauled the ball towards the line with defenders hanging off to score.

Collapsed

Another scrum in the centre of the field in the Sandbach 22 resulted in a collapsed scrum. The penalty was converted by Hooper.

On 40 minutes another driving maul by Hales was rewarded with a try from McFarlane, Hooper missed the conversion. In the second half Hales ran at the opposition and saw Padian collect the ball and burst over the line for an unconverted try.

Shortly afterwards Sandbach came back with some strong passages of play and were awarded a penalty to pull back to 24-17. Sandbach had more of the ball in the half and always threatened and remained within one score to draw level.

On 61 minutes the home side were relieved to gain a penalty just inside their 22 which Hooper slotted home.

For the last 20 minutes of the game Sandbach put Hales under constant pressure with many try scoring chances but Hales' defence was fantastic standing strong to a man. Head Coach Ben Hughes told the players that the defensive effort was excellent Broadstreet 2nds v Old Halesonians 2nds

Old Hales 2nds travelled the 40 miles to face Broadstreet 2nds in the Midlands Reserve League where they were told Broadstreet couldn't field a team.

Old Hales captain, Rob Butler, was frustrated



Old Hales player Carl Robinson trying to find a way through the Sandbach defence

at the lack of communication from Broadstreet to call the game off earlier but accepted the walkover league win.

Kidderminster 2nds 14 Old Halesonians 3rds 24

The league fixture against Kidder 2nds was a much tougher proposition than the friendly game played two weeks ago.

Kidderfield a much stronger team that had more

than their fair share of possession. Old Hales defended

well and took their opportunities in attack to score four well-taken tries, with two from centre Phil Jukes and one each from wingers Callum Roberts and Dan Smith.

Old Halesonians 4ths/Vets 66 Kidderminster 3rds 7

Old Hales played Kiddy 3rds in the Dave Cook memorial cup game. Old Hales ran out comfortable winners at 66-7.

Stoke's win increases pressure on Sherwood

Villa 0 Stoke 1

MARKO Arnautovic increased the pressure on Villa boss Tim Sherwood as Stoke claimed their first Premier League away win since February.

The midfielder struck to secure successive wins for Mark Hughes' resurgent side in a deserved 1-0 victory at Villa Park.

The Potters' last away Premier League win came in Sherwood's first game in charge at Villa in February.

Arnautovic had already seen a goal disallowed in the first half while Charlie Adam's audacious 60-yard lob almost had the visitors in front.

But Arnautovic won it 10 minutes after the break as slapdash defending from the hosts cost them.

Villa failed to mount a response after going behind and remain winless in the Premier League since the opening day, losing the last four, and only implosions from Sunderland and Newcastle stopped Villa slipping to the bottom of the table.

Jack Grealish was benched in the week that saw him pledge his international future to England, while Mamadou Diouf replaced the injured Xherdan Shaqiri.

But without Grealish Villa lacked any spark with Stoke, worryingly for Sherwood, comfortable.

An early sweeping move left Villa open at the back and Bojan spotted Diouf's run, only for Micah Richards to produce a superb block when the striker pulled the trigger.

Stoke dictated the play, but the game lacked real quality until Adam almost repeated his wonder goal against Chelsea after 18 minutes.

Albion heroes are ready to help league

ALBION legend Bob Taylor and former Hawthorns favourite Richard Sneaks are teaming up to help support the Dudley and Cradley Heath League as special guests.

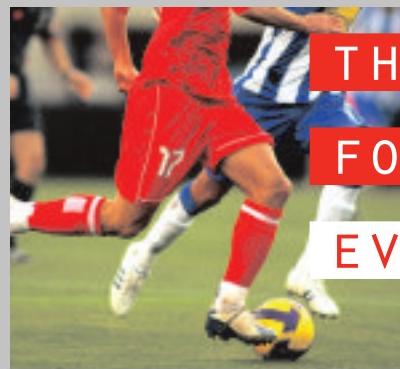
The two former footballers will check in for a sporting evening at the Dudley Ex-Servicemen's Club on Friday, November 20.

The league is staging the event to raise funding so that they can help keep costs down for all the sides involved.

Tickets cost £10 each and the numbers will be limited so they are being sold on a first come, first served basis.

Anyone interested in buying tickets should contact either Mel Lewis (07826 052918), Carl Dakin (07919 107774) or Brian Pedley (07899 635771).

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Heathens are motivated, says captain

CRADLEY boss Will Pottinger says they have added motivation heading into the second leg of their Knockout Cup semi-final with King's Lynn at Perry Barr next Wednesday.

The Heathens have seen their future placed in jeopardy after the announcement they are searching for new management and their consortium will not be continuing to run the club in 2016.

Pottinger is now desperate to see them overcome the Young Stars and ensure their Perry Barr showdown is not the last time the famous Heathens race jacket is seen on track.

He said: "We know there is a chance that this could be our last meeting, so I guess there is an added motivation for us there."

"We are still hopeful someone will come forward and we'll be able to continue next year, but we know there is no guarantee so we are desperate to try and extend this season."

"We'll be doing everything we can to make it past King's Lynn and into the final against Eastbourne."

"Regardless of what the future holds we want to end this season on a high, so we are certainly looking to try and go all the way and win the Knockout Cup."

Meanwhile Heathens star Matt Williamson has spoken of his shock at the management's decision to stand down.

"The news was a real shock to be honest, but I can understand how it's happened," Williamson said.

Cradley Heathens Supporters' Trust say they are desperate not to see the team die after its owners announced they were stepping down.

Lifelong supporter Spencer Billingham said: "We are just coming to terms with what has happened like everyone else."

Bowlers have eyes on £3,500 Masters prize share out

SOME of the top bowlers in the country are looking to get a share of prize money of more than £3,500 in the finals of a competition.

This year's in the All Aspects George Masters final will be taking place on Saturday.

One of the favourites is Greg Smith from Alvechurch who won the Waterloo handicap that was televised live on ITV4.

Lancashire's Simon Coupe, who has won every major honour in the game, will be looking to win his first Masters and there are plenty of other top class county bowlers in the final 16 hoping to take the £1,000 winners cheque.

Play starts at 10am at The George Bowling Club, George Road, Oldbury B68 9LN.

The finalists line-up is:
 Paul Rolls v Simon Coupe
 Craig Barker v Jamie Wyer
 Chris Ward v Dave Hayward
 Jon Palmer v Steve Wallace
 Dave Sadler v Greg Smith
 Chris Baker v Carl Fielding
 Shelton Orpe v Neil Simpson
 Anthony Bracken v Gordon Hawkins

Yeltz can't break the stalemate

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Old Hales hold their ground

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No relegation fight, says McAuley

Football

GARETH McAULEY wants Albion to start building in the right direction again after stressing another relegation scrap is not in their plans.

Two straight defeats and a haul of just eight points from their opening eight games has left the Baggies 17th in the early Premier League table and supporters fearing another long campaign battling near the bottom.

But centre-back McAuley insists sights are set far higher.

He said: "The aim for the season is to push up towards the top half if we can, and especially to keep away from the bottom three. The last couple of seasons, there's been times when we've been

too close for comfort."

After consecutive top-10 finishes under Roy Hodgson and Steve Clarke, Albion have spent the past two campaigns dicing against the drop and the target for McAuley is clear.

"We would like to finish the season with our best ever points tally in the Premier League and reach that 50 points mark, which we've never quite done in the past," he said. "When I joined the club, it was always about building and doing better, which we did initially. But now we've had

a couple of seasons where we fell back a little bit so it would be nice to start going in the right direction again and to start building again."

McAuley, currently on international duty with Northern Ireland as they look to secure Euro 2016 qualification, has been a mainstay of Albion's defence to this point of the season.

Boss Tony Pulis signed Jonny Evans and James Chester to bolster his backline over the summer but the 35-year-old admits to relishing the competition.

"When you are in the team, you need to perform every week."

LATE STRIKE LEVELS GAME

Halesowen Town 1 Nantwich Town 1
NANTWICH man of the match Matt Kosylo broke Halesowen's hearts with a superb equaliser two minutes into injury time.

The Yeltz had looked set for all three points after Isaac Cooper grabbed an earlier lead.

Three minutes into the second half he poked home from close range after Keyon Reffell helped the ball on towards goal, following good work by Reece Hales and Luke Connolly down the right.

Both sides had an early corner cleared before Rob Elvins nodded narrowly wide for Halesowen after six minutes.

Matt Bell then shot just past the post from 20 yards for Nantwich in the 12th minute and Elliott Osborne's corner was played back in for Matt Bailey to send a low header just wide of the Yeltz post a minute later.

A dangerous 17th minute cross from Cooper was then cleared although chances were few in the first half midfield battle.

Crossbar

The Dabbers went close towards half-time when Josh Hancock played a deft ball into the penalty area but home goalkeeper Dan Platt saved under his crossbar after Bell clipped the ball on at the first touch.

Keyon Reffell then rifled a 20 yard shot at visiting goalkeeper Terry Smith before Kosylo curled a free-kick just past the post with Platt left watching just seconds before the interval.

After taking the 48th minute lead in a move started and finished by Cooper, Halesowen went close again as Hales drove wide.

Kosylo received a yellow card after going down under a challenge in the penalty area following an interchange and Bell curled a 67th minute free-kick over the Halesowen bar.

Substitute Lewis Short then hesitated too long after collecting a long ball forward into the Yeltz area in the 69th minute.

Livewire Kosylo cut in from the left after meeting Andy White's long pass in the 78th minute but was denied by Platt before Nantwich substitute Josh Gordon struck the home side netting three minutes later.

Kosylo grabbed an injury time equaliser.

Pressure is growing for Pulis



Palace's Wilfried Zaha and Albion's James Morrison battle for the ball at Selhurst Park on Saturday

Crystal Palace 2 Albion 0

ALBION failed to register a serious shot on target until the game was already lost and when Palace finally did breach their defences through Yannick Bolasie, midway through the second half, it was merely justice for a performance of patience against an adventure-free opponent.

Pulis' post-match frustration bordered on anger, but it was an emotion shared with the 1,300 travelling supporters, many of whom awoke before dawn and travelled more than 100 miles to watch such an insipid display against a Palace team which, while talented,

does not deserve tactics usually reserved for playing the likes of Barcelona.

Albion's investigations of a home defence, which looked shaky on the rare occasions it was tested, never got beyond the exploratory.

It was football, but not as many people know it and certainly not in the form which makes them fall in love with the game, or with a club.

Is there a tougher team in the Premier League to watch than Albion right now? It's doubtful.

The fact Pulis' men failed to register a shot in the 21 minutes between Bolasie's opener and Yohan Cabaye might be the most damning statistic of all.

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Our season starts now, says Jackett

WOLVES' season starts here – that was the message from boss Kenny Jackett, who hailed the contributions of goalscorers Benito Afobe and Kevin McDonald.

A second successive 3-0 victory propelled Jackett's team into the Championship play-off picture, just a week after they were only three points off the bottom of the league.

And while not getting carried away with his team's form, Jackett expressed his delight at the victory over Huddersfield – and bemoaned the two-week break before their next fixture owing to the international break.

He said: "We've got seven points out of nine, there's the opportunity to do that in this league, and we're disappointed the international break has now come."

"The big thing is now our season is ahead of us and we have to keep building."

McDonald, who has withdrawn from the Scotland squad with a back injury, scored one and Afobe the other two as Wolves picked up their third clean sheet of the season.

The pair have both dealt with off-the-field distractions and been far from at their best this season, but played a crucial role in Saturday's victory.

Jackett added: "Maybe Afobe was distracted, it would be the case for any young player, it's tough, but he's been a big player for us and he's only been here since January. We think he has a very good future at 22 and he's really got his confidence at Wolves which is what he was looking for when he came here."

"McDonald adding goals to a very good game. His concentration's been very good and he's a key player. With Coady getting suspended and Edwards getting injured it's opened up the partnership again for Price and McDonald."

Villa apologise for dropping training

VILLA have apologised to supporters after opting not to stage their traditional October half-term open training session due to fixture congestion.

The annual event at Villa Park is particularly popular with young fans.

But Tim Sherwood's men face Southampton in the Capital One Cup on the Wednesday of the school break (October 28), forcing the club to put the open training session on hold.

A statement on the club's website said: "We would like to apologise to supporters who look forward to attending open training and we will explore the possibility of staging an event later in

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